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**TUCKER'S VOYAGE.**

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**FIVE MONTHS**

**IN**

**LABRADOR AND NEWFOUNDLAND,**

**During the Summer of 1838.**

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**By EPHRAIM W. TUCKER.**

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**CONCORD:**

**ISRAEL S. BOYD AND WILLIAM WHITE.**

**1839.**

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## P R E F A C E.

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WHEN a new publication is offered to the reading community, the inquiry naturally arises, who is the author? and, what are his motives in writing? Both these inquiries I will endeavor to answer as briefly as possible.

In the spring of 1834, agreeably to previous impressions of duty, I entered upon a course of study, preparatory to the work of the gospel ministry. Having no friends, whose worldly circumstances enabled them to afford me the means of pursuing an education, I was thrown entirely upon my own resources. In the autumn of that year, my parents, who had been residing at Ogden, in New-York, attracted by the hopes of better advantages in the west, removed to Toledo, in Ohio, and I was left, at the age of

sixteen, to pursue my own way in the world, exposed to its dangers and temptations. My purpose, however, remaining unshaken, I devoted myself assiduously to study, and having become prepared for admission to the Hamilton Institute in New-York, I engaged in a district school during the winter of 1836, in order to provide the means of attending that seminary, in the following season. Before I had remained one month, however, in this occupation, my health became so precarious, that I had to abandon my school and studies, and was confined to my room during most of the winter. In the spring of 1835, in the hope of regaining my health, I visited my friends at Toledo ; and during the summer so far recovered as to be able to renew my studies. In the autumn, having been approved to preach, I entered upon the calling so dear to my heart ; but in November following, I was again prostrated by disease, and confined to my room for the ten months following.

In the spring of 1838, at the urgent advice of physicians, who considered it as my only remaining means of regaining health, I was induced to undertake a voyage at sea. On repairing to Bos-

ton, I met with captain S. R., who was to sail in a staunch schooner as early as the 20th of May, and engaged passage with him to the fishing grounds of Newfoundland and Labrador. The experiment has proved a successful one, and my health is greatly improved.

The result of my observations, during five months absence, is given in the following pages. Passing amid scenes entirely new to me, in a climate rigid but healthy, and among a race of men, of whose characters, persons, and pursuits, I had never formed any adequate conception, I determined to note down such facts and incidents as might be of service to me on my return. Notwithstanding the great number of men from New-England engaged in one way or another in the fisheries, very few in the interior of the country are well informed on the particulars of that vast and lucrative business. Nor are they generally better informed as to the manners and customs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, or the general features and appearance of those cold and sterile regions. I have endeavored to present in the following pages, a faithful description of the inhabitants, both natives and

whites, and of their condition as respects general character, information, and morals. It will be found to be low in the scale of civilization. It will be seen that a great field is there open for the labors of the apostles of temperance, the missionaries of the Cross, and the pioneers of education and morals. And if the humble narrative which the author now presents to the public, shall be the means of drawing the attention of christians and philanthropists to a dark, cold, and benighted region of the earth, so that any substantial good may be done to the humblest individual of our race, the warmest hopes of the author, in this little volume, will be realized.

E. W. TUCKER.

*March, 1839.*

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## FIVE MONTHS

IN

## LABRADOR AND NEWFOUNDLAND.

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### CHAPTER I.

Departure from the harbor of Boston.—Ludicrous blunder of a landsman.—Accommodations of a schooner.—Sickness at sea.—Dismal fogs of New-Britain.—Dangerous situation, and fortunate escape.—Stories of shipwreck.—Cause of departure from our course.—First sight of Newfoundland.—A Sparrow.—Gambols of porpoises.—Scenery at Boone-Bay.—Disembarkation.

On the nineteenth of May, 1838, I embarked in the schooner Alfred, of Duxbury, S. R. master, on a voyage to the coast of Labrador. The balmy breezes of the opening spring, laden with their vernal perfumes, so exhilarating to all, seemed peculiarly so to me, as I was now, for the first time, trusting myself to the voyage, always arduous, and often perilous, upon the bosom of the deep. Our crew consisted of eleven persons, including myself, a young man from Indiana, and another from

New-York—the two latter, like myself, laboring under ill health, having resolved upon the voyage, in the hope of deriving benefit from a change of climate, scene and occupation. As we sailed out of the harbor of Boston, the sea being scarcely ruffled by the gentle breezes that swelled the sails of the *Alfred*, I climbed to her mast head, to cast a lingering look at the delightful city, perched upon its triple hills, so famed in New-England annals ; and there I gazed upon her receding domes and spires, until the lofty cupola of the state-house itself faded from the sight. The scenery about Boston and among the islands in the harbor, at this season, so strikingly beautiful, I need not attempt to portray, as most of those who will spend a brief hour over my unpretending narrative, have probably seen and admired the rich landscapes, which render Boston, with its charming villages adjacent, one of the most beautiful places in the world.

A voyage at sea, to a landsman, is something like taking a leap in the dark—so new and strange are all things around him.—When the vessel first begins to feel the great swells of the ever-heaving ocean, and the last glimpse of “ native land,” is seen, in spite

of all his philosophy, the adventurer will feel a throbbing at the heart, and the images of home and of friends, from whom he is sailing far away, will throng before him. By degrees, however, this mood of the mind is changed. The novelty of his new situation, and the cares and bustle of the little bark, careering over the billows, gradually reconcile him to his new situation.

The inexperienced landsman, on board a fisherman, on hearing the odd and awkward sea phrases of the captain and crew, is apt to look upon them as an ignorant set of fellows ; but he soon finds his mistake. My own blunders in this particular were sometimes ludicrous, and procured me not unfrequently the laugh of the crew. When I first heard them using the most uncouth phrases, accompanied by some rude and unmeaning jest, or irreverent oath, I pitied their folly, and attributed it to their gross ignorance. I immediately set about correcting what I supposed to be their erroneous nautical phrases, and trying to persuade them to abandon terms, which I considered foolish and vulgar in the extreme. But I soon found that I was laboring to very little purpose. Indeed I was giv-

en pretty significantly to understand, that this kind of advice and remonstrance would not answer. They would have me to know, they did not want a *landsmen* to instruct them, contrary to the practices of their whole lives. They “knew a thing or two,” and didn’t want the *palaver* of a land-lubber! So I found it safe to wink at practices I could not approve, and affect to join at times in rude merriment, for which I had little relish. When called upon to perform some act of duty, the blunders I committed were sometimes quite ludicrous. When I thought I had mastered sufficiently the *lingo* of the quarter-deck, to know the jib from the fore-sail, I determined one day to try my skill.—The captain gave the order, “*down haul the flying jib.*” Prompt to obey, I caught hold of the fore-sail halyards, loosed it, and down came the fore-sail, instead of the jib, to my utter amazement. The captain, observing my confusion, forbore to censure me, as it was my first experiment, but I earned of course the hearty ridicule of the whole crew. The captain good humoredly reminded me, that I must always remember to *pull the right rope*, if I expected to make an active

tar—a piece of advice, containing a moral, applicable to very many situations in life.

For the benefit of such as are unacquainted with a sea-faring life, I will give a description of the domestic accommodations of our little floating castle, which is a fair sample of others belonging to the class. Our sofas and settees, consisted of two small wooden chests, nailed fast to the cabin floor. Chairs we had none. Our table furniture was very economically arranged, so as not to interfere with the room of the vessel, or the profits of the voyage.—At the commencement, each one of us had allotted to him such implements as seemed to be indispensable. These implements, it is customary for each to mark with the initials of his name, or otherwise, and to him they belong during the voyage, and he must take care of them—for if he chance to lose them, he must inevitably go without. A tin cup and basin, a knife, fork and spoon, fell to my share in the equipment; and being so few in number, I soon learned to use them with promptitude and despatch. Madame *Trollope*, or some other English trollop, has given an account of the customary rush made by the yankees on board of steam-boats, or

in hotels, when the bell strikes for dinner.—It is very much the same on board a fishing schooner. Sometimes a choice dish of soup, or a prime chowder would give rise to unusual dexterity in reaching the table of the Alfred. Perhaps a little delay in seeking his apparatus, would bring some one in the rear at the “crowning dish,” and this would generally give rise to sour looks on his part; and the disappointed sailor’s ejaculation, “O——I’m dished,”—or “I’m sewed up!”—usually set the rest into a roar of laughter. Such *practical* jokes very often cost some one of the crew a good dinner, and angry looks for a whole day. But the hungry sailor, thus cheated out of his dinner, becomes perhaps the aggressor in his turn, and enjoys the fun and frolic as heartily as any of his comrades. In reference to a cook at sea, it is an old saying among sailors, that the Lord provides us meat, but the devil sends the cooks. No one will deny the former part of the sentiment, however great the perversion of Providence in the latter clause of the sailor’s logic; yet all hands during the voyage of the Alfred, would at times have been glad of a *cook*, from any



source! Each of us, for the want of one, took his turn at cooking in rotation.

Our sleeping accommodations were not the least among the beauties and conveniences of a well organized cabin at sea. Around the sides of the vessel were small divisions, where such of the crew as could sleep contrived to stow themselves away. Our beds of down were fresh from the farmer's stubble, and our sheets and blankets were of corresponding texture. I have often thought, whilst trying to dose away in sleep in such a berth, that I could almost count the number of threads in my coarse blankets, by the ridges on my back. Our embroidery and curtains were readily prepared from a side cut of coarse canvass, the remains of an old sail, delicately strung upon an ancient fish line at the close of day. But even in lodgings thus homely, I could at times obtain the sweetest rest, as the feeblest body may by degrees become accustomed to the severest hardships and difficulties of the mariner's life.

The twentieth of May, the day following our departure, was the Sabbath—and most miserably was it spent to me; mine having become a severe case of sea-sickness. The

winds were high, and the sea exceedingly rough, so that the captain shared a similar fate with me. I did not feel great sympathy for him; but it was probably owing to the plight in which the rest of the crew saw the captain, that I was spared their usual rough jokes, and probably from being forced to take the customary infallible dose, in such cases, of raw pork and molasses.

On the following day, having made good progress with a fair wind, we encountered a fog, which continued to increase in density, until we were completely shrouded, as it were, in darkness even at noon day. Those who are acquainted with the dismal fogs of New-Britain, need not be informed, that in the midst of them there is truly little difference between night and day. In such a situation, afloat upon the wide and trackless ocean, the compass, "that little thing under the binnacle," as the landsmen say, was our all in all. A smacking breeze springing up in our favor, hurried us on with great rapidity, and "giving the land a good birth," we apprehended no danger whatever, except being run down by some trader, and sharing the sad fate of many a poor fisherman. It is an in-

cident of no rare occurrence, for the inmates of small craft to be suddenly aroused from their dremay repose in quiet hammocks, to face the horrors of the midnight tempest, the fierce tornado, and perchance the more dreadful contact of ships rushing together amid the darkness. In such scenes, the tempest-tost mariner, heedless as he generally is, is made to realize the truth of the sentiment, "in the midst of life we are in death." The crew of our schooner were now divided into two watches, of four each; for the fog did not seem to diminish, and we were unable to out-ride it. The first watch had retired to rest; the second was divided, one being placed at the helm, and the others at the bow, to keep a good look out ahead, for any thing that appeared unfriendly or suspicious. The remaining two were below, endeavoring to kindle an unwilling morning fire. It was a general time of slumber, and thoughtless security. The first watch were in sound sleep—the captain reclined upon his hammock, and "got fast by the eye-lids," probably supposing himself wide from the land, and directly upon his course. Our worthy helmsman, however, was wide awake. An experienced

seaman, and used to danger, he knew that there might be peril lurking near, while running down the coast of Nova Scotia in the night, amid the fogs. At an unexpected moment, a loud shout from the bows, of "*breakers ahead!*" roused every soul on board, and the men rushed half naked upon deck. The captain, palsied almost by the shock, still gave his orders with great presence of mind.— "Keep her away—keep her away—hard to the lee—down with the main peak"—shouted the captain. But at this critical moment, the helmsman, struggling at the tiller, replied, "I can't weather it!—get the small boat ready!" "We've no pins, and the oars are barred in the main hold," replied the astonished crew. "Lose no time!" shouted the captain—"sway up the fore sheet!" All was now silence—the vessel had run in the space of a few minutes from thirty fathoms of water into five—the most intense anxiety was felt by every soul on board—when the helmsman exclaimed, "She'll clear it! she'll clear it!"—and presently we were past the seeming danger. The breakers we had neared were the St. Mary's ledges, off the coast of Nova Scotia. The captain now changed his course,

and put further out to sea. The dismissed watch retired to the cabin to talk over the fortunate escape of the vessel—but this calm was of short duration. The words of exultation, “we are safely out from among the rocks,” were scarcely uttered, when from aloft we heard again the same ominous cry of “breakers ahead!” Thrice in succession was the alarm thus given, as the roar of the waters among the rocks, gave warning of our imminent peril. The fog continuing, and the increase of the gale, gave us reason to fear that we had missed our course, and should be finally lost; but it was our happy fortune to pass through all these dangers unharmed.—The protection of a kind and beneficent Providence was extended to us in an especial manner in this instance, for which I would praise and adore His holy name.

These circumstances, as usual among the sailors, gave rise to many dismal anecdotes of shipwreck, disasters and death. Every one had his tale of danger, and as we sat together upon the quarter-deck, listening and recounting these adventures of the mariner, the narrative to me was exceedingly interesting.—The account of one of these ocean disasters,

having some analogy to our own case while amid the breakers, I here present, as I had it from the mouth of the narrator. An English trader, with a stout and staunch ship, was some years since sailing across the grand banks of Newfoundland, when he was overtaken by one of those dense fogs, which render it difficult to see far ahead even during the day, and impossible in the night to distinguish objects distant twice the length of the ship. The captain placed a light at the mast-head, and a watch forward, to look out for the fishing smacks that are accustomed to lay at anchor on the banks. The wind was blowing a stiff breeze, and the vessel going ahead at a great rate, when suddenly the cry from the watch of "a sail ahead!" alarmed the trader; but the words were scarcely uttered, before he was upon her. She was a small schooner at anchor with her broadside towards him. Her crew were all asleep, and had neglected to hoist a light, the usual and necessary precaution in such cases. The bows of the trader struck the fisherman amid ship, and the force and weight of the superior vessel bore her down. As the crushed wreck was sinking beneath the waves, the

captain of the trader had a glimpse of two or three half naked beings rushing from their cabin, to be overwhelmed by the waters, and heard their last piercing shrieks, as his vessel glided onward, while the poor mariners sunk in their watery graves.

The inquisitive reader has doubtless pondered in his own mind, the cause of our departure from the course we intended to run. Our skipper, as was natural, when the mistake became obvious, looked over his log and reckoning, to see if he could discover any error ; but after a careful revision, he found all things right, and not the slightest error could he discover. Was the compass at fault?—We happened to have two on board, and to test them, we took that from the binnacle and placed it with the other, side by side, on the quarter-deck. They traversed correctly.—What then could be the cause of our dangerous departure from the true course? Our fears were awakened—many ingenious interrogatories were put—every one had his reason—and a general debate ensued among the crew. At length some one suggested the propriety of searching the binnacle. This was no sooner done, than the whole mystery



was at once solved—and the blundering sailor was shocked to perceive, that it was not for want of a navigator that we had failed to go to pieces upon the rocks! The careless old rogue, during some leisure moment, had placed an old rusty iron candle-stick hard by the side of our magnetic pilot, and as he was paid for his labor, did not care a farthing which way he led us—having very little to gain, and nothing to lose except his worthless life, and that he seemed to care very little about! Thus, in the various situations of life—in politics, in morals, and religion. The unskilful, or careless pilot will lead individuals, and communities into error, and oftentimes upon the breakers! Young reader, see to it, while you are in the harbor of youth, before you set sail upon the tempestuous ocean of life. Be wise in the choice of your compass—choose truth, and keep it as pure as the sunbeam from all attractions of selfishness and deception—encase it in equity and righteousness—place it in the binnacle of sincerity—hoist the sail of perseverance, and trust no one at the helm, but steer yourself—and success will attend you!

But I hasten to subjects more immediately



connected with this narrative. The dense fog, of which I have spoken, continued to hover around us for four days, when the sun broke forth in all his glory, giving joy and animation to our hearts. According to our reckoning, we were now, on the morning of the 23d of May, nearly abreast the Bay of Islands, which it would be impracticable to enter in a fog. About eight o'clock in the morning, the thrilling cry of "land!" was heard from the main-top; and I question whether Columbus himself felt more joy than I experienced, when first the rugged coast of Newfoundland hove in sight. The idea of soon again treading on terra firma was exhilarating to us all. I was much delighted with an incident that took place, as we neared the coast. A little sparrow which had winged its way out into the gulf, approached us, and for some time fluttered about the vessel, as if to welcome us to the land. Its tameness was to me remarkable; for after circling for some time around the spars, the little songster at length perched upon the fore boom.—Thither I gently moved, stretched out my arm towards it, and took it in my hand. It made no attempt to escape. I provided for its en-

tertainment a little rice, and a cup of water, which seemed to increase its confidence, for it afterwards sat upon my finger, and sung one of its sweetest songs. During most of the day, our little stranger kept about the vessel; but as we made slow progress, and night began to approach, she sped to the shore before us. The day was calm, and the bosom of the ocean tranquil. The scenery before us—the high promontories of the Bay of Islands extending into the gulf, with the Newfoundland mountains in the distance towering upwards to the clouds—were objects of great interest. Climbing up to the main-top, I spent some time in gazing landward upon the variegated landscape, as well as upon the wide ocean below. During the calm of the latter portion of this day, we saw a school of porpoises, gambolling about the prow of the vessel. At a little distance we saw a grampus, heaving his huge form above the surface—and attempting his unwieldy sports among his finny neighbors of the deep.

Being unable to enter the Bay of Islands, the captain resolved to pass down the coast about twenty miles to Boone bay. After laying off in sight of land for three days, we

improved a favorable wind, and entered the harbor. As we sailed up the channel, I reconnoitred the shore with a glass. Towards nightfall we floated with the tide between those gigantic cliffs which are reared upon the right and left of Boone bay. So calm had the atmosphere become, that the turning of a plank, or the accidental falling of an oar upon deck produced a sound, which echo repeated from the mountain shores. And when the captain, now and then, gave the shout of command, there seemed to be airy tongues that mocked him from every cliff. The scenery here is strikingly grand and beautiful.—Rock above rock, and cliff succeeding cliff, stretched upwards and far away, while the sprinkling of green foliage, among the gray rocks, and stunted firs that crowned the edges of the precipices, with here and there a snow-capped summit glistening in the rays of the declining sun, all together rendered the scene exceedingly grand and beautiful. At some distance from the harbor, I perceived a few small huts, the inhabitants of which, as soon as they saw we were from “the States,” saluted us by the firing of guns, a compliment

which we of course returned. After mooring the vessel, we lowered the yawl, and all hands went on shore.

## CHAPTER II.

Welcome reception.—Character of the shore inhabitants, and the nature of their business.—Trade and pursuits.—Great importance of the fisheries.—Soil and productions of Newfoundland.—Effects of the climate.—Severity of the winters.—St. Johns, the capital.—Low state of education, religion and morals.—Strife between differing sects.—Punishment of a newspaper editor.—Prevalence of intemperance.—Trade with the natives of the interior.—The Micmacs and Mountaineers: their habits, dispositions and amusements.—Indian dances and revelry.

We had no sooner reached the shore, than the inhabitants came huddling down to see their unfrequent visitants. After making numerous inquiries, and ascertaining the particulars of our voyage, they welcomed us to their fire-sides. We accompanied them up to one of their huts, surrounded by the tall grass upon the strand, and near the water's edge. A green plat of several acres extended back toward the hills, on which was a profusion of shrubbery, intermixed with the spruce, fir and yew trees. The owner of the hut politely threw open his door, on entering

which, we made an involuntary obeisance, rather than receive the salutation which people are apt to get, who carry their heads too high. We found the inhabitants full of animation, boastful of their hunting and fishing exploits, and extremely inquisitive about every thing relating to the United States. They expressed a strong desire to leave their bleak, inhospitable climate, and barren mountains, to seek a better country—but wanted the means. They would gladly exchange their hunting and fishing, for the cultivation of a fertile soil, the advantages of which to the American husbandman they seemed to comprehend. And when I explained to them the rapid advance and improvement of agriculture in our country, and told them that it was the practice of the governors of the different states, to set apart at the close of each year, a day of public thanksgiving to God for the blessings of a bountiful harvest—they coolly replied, that they were not under such an obligation; for it was evident to them that the all wise Disposer of events had more highly favored the Americans, by giving them a rich and fertile soil, adapted to cultivation, while he had allotted to the islanders scarcely the

means of raising a patch of good potatoes. The poor man's ideas of the benevolence of Deity seemed to be sadly circumscribed by his situation.

There is a fur trading establishment situated in the harbor, owned by a wealthy Englishman, from whose little shop three hundred families of the inhabitants in Newfoundland are annually supplied with articles of clothing, salt, &c., in exchange for the furs which they bring in during the spring and fall. The fisheries, also, furnish the inhabitants with other means of supplying their wants; and the exports of Newfoundland find their way into remote corners of the earth. Their furs go to England, their cod-fish to the West-Indies and South America, their herring and salmon are sent to Grand Cairo and Jerusalem. Boone bay is one of the most commodious harbors in Newfoundland, and extends upwards into the country about twenty miles, between high and precipitous shores, on either side. A vessel can here lie safely at anchor within a cable's length of the land, so bold is the ascent of the rocks that line the shore. There are only forty inhabitants living at this place, and at Rocky harbor, which is situated down near the mouth

of the bay, and much exposed to the winds and seas.

The westerly coast of Newfoundland, from Cape Ray to Cape Carbone, is in possession of the French, so far as the fishing is concerned, under the treaty of 1759. Their line of possession, however, extends only seventy feet back from the mark of high tide.—This right, I believe, unless further extended by treaty, will expire in 1840. Difficulties have frequently arisen between the French and English fishermen, and residents, and the former have in some instances compelled the removal of the latter, in cases where they had attempted to establish trading houses on this coast. An armed French vessel lay in Rocky harbor during the past summer, for the protection of their fishermen. In one instance, a fishing schooner was seized, and three or four hundred quintals of fish thrown overboard, for some real or supposed infraction of the Frenchmen's rights, of which they are very tenacious. But it is a fact that ought not to escape notice, that they most grossly intrude upon the rights both of American and English fishermen in those seas.

The large island that is called by the Eng-



lish Newfoundland, and by the French *Terre Neuve*, shuts up the northern entrance into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The perpetual fogs which cover it, are probably produced by the currents that flow from the Antilles, and remain for a time between the great bank and the coast, before they escape into the Atlantic ocean. As these streams retain a great portion of the heat which was imbibed in the tropical regions, they are from fifteen to twenty degrees of Fahrenheit warmer than the surrounding water at the banks of Newfoundland. Whenever, therefore, the temperature of the atmosphere is colder than that of the currents, a vapour must necessarily arise from them, which obscures those places with a moist and dense air.\*

Within twenty years after the supposed discovery of Newfoundland, by the Cabots,† the abundance of fish on its banks attracted the attention of European nations. As early as

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\*Malte Brun, vol. iii, 198.

† Under the name of *New-found-land*, were originally comprehended all the islands that lie westerly of it in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. They were discovered by John and Sebastian Cabot in 1497, who gave them the name of *Prima Vista*; but *John Verazzan*, who noticed them more particularly afterwards, gave them the name of *Terre Neuve*, or *New found-land*. Verazzan was afterwards taken and eaten by the savages of one of the islands.

1519, we are told of 50 ships being seen there at one time. The earliest adventurers in that fishery, were the Biscayans of Spain, and the Basques of France. In 1577, the French had 150 vessels there, the Spaniards 100, the Portuguese 50, while the English had only 15. The Spaniards and Portuguese finally relinquished these fisheries, and they were engrossed by the English and French, until the United States, from their superior advantages of neighborhood and facilities, as well as skill and enterprise, came in for a large share. There are at present about 3000 vessels annually engaged in these fisheries, from the United States, France and Great Britain, employing more than ten thousand seamen. This great nursery of seamen, and source of profit to the country, has received the fostering care of our government, and constitutes now one of its most important interests.

The soil of Newfoundland is exceedingly light and porous, and full of fibrous roots, rendering it difficult to pierce without a spade. There are some situations, where the soil more nearly approaches a loam and alluvion; but at no place which I noticed is it sufficiently rich and moist for profitable culture. Patches

of ground, rendered tolerably productive by the scraping together of turf, and working it from year to year, and manuring it richly with the offals of the fishery, may here and there be seen—but generally under the supervision of those who can *afford* such expensive kinds of husbandry. The ridges and rocky elevations are generally covered from four to twenty inches by a sort of earthy moss, unfit to sustain any other vegetable substance. In walking over this covering of the primitive rock, the foot sinks into it up to the ankle, and as you proceed from rock to rock, whole yards of the moss will sometimes be dislodged and slide down at once. The general face of the country is such that cultivation to any great extent is wholly impracticable. Travelling, to any great extent, over such a surface, is extremely fatiguing.

The winters in Newfoundland are, of course, very severe. Snow falls at the beginning of November, and covers the ground until May. During this long period, it is almost literally a continued storm of snow and sleet. When summer comes, it comes on so suddenly, that spring is scarcely known. In the valleys, and on the southerly sides of the mountains, the

herbage springs up rapidly, while the mountains around are covered with deep beds of perpetual snow and ice. During a considerable portion of the summer months, the island is covered by fogs, sometimes heavy and wet. These are not deemed unhealthy—but on the contrary, being produced by the evaporation of salt water, are considered beneficial in many chronic complaints. A residence upon Newfoundland during the summer season, is often found a curative in cases where other remedies have totally failed. The natives are generally very healthy. Epidemic diseases are scarcely ever known. There are occasionally cases of influenza and consumption noticed, but the health of the population is in general remarkable. Of those who are cut off in youth or middle age, it is supposed that one third are caused by the terrible scourge of intemperance.

Of the forest trees in Newfoundland, the pine, spruce, hemlock, mountain ash, and white birch (to use the vernacular phrases) are those only which attain to any considerable size. Near the coast, no trees of large growth are observed; but twenty or thirty miles in the interior, in the valleys among the moun-

tains, there are found trees of great size, and suitable for ship building or exportation, could they be conveniently transported to the sea. I saw a white birch tree at Boone bay, brought from a neighboring valley, which measured nine feet in circumference and sixty feet in length. At the head of St. George's bay, is a commodious place for ship building, where a few small vessels have been built for the fishing business.

My limited residence in Newfoundland, rendered it impracticable to go into any investigation of its botanical or mineral productions; and of the white inhabitants who live along the coast, I could learn but very little on these subjects, and of the natives, nothing. The island may be said to be fenced in, as it were, by white inhabitants, who settle in the coves, bays, and harbours, and upon the small streams, for the purpose of salmon fishing, and their dwellings are not unfrequently five or six leagues apart. These mostly consist of miserable huts, constructed out of spruce poles and birch bark, and some covered with turf. Most of these people go poorly clad, and are extremely dirty, and negligent of all proper regard for cleanliness. They are gross-

ly ignorant in respect to every thing but the visible horizon around them—and their principal delight is the almost universal occupation of fishing. This indeed is their principal source of living. A lamentable degree of ignorance prevails among these shore inhabitants generally, with the exception of the few large trading places, such as St. Johns, Bona Vista, Cape Carbonier, Placentia, &c. which are towns of considerable importance, where enterprising foreigners have settled, and carry on ship building, and various branches of trade and business. St. Johns, the capital, is a place of considerable importance, contains a population of nearly fifteen thousand, embracing some wealthy and intelligent merchants and professional men. A large proportion, however, are engaged in the fisheries, in one way or another. The houses of worship are principally for the Episcopalians, and Roman Catholics—these two classes of christians embracing nearly all who profess to be religious, among the inhabitants. Between these denominations, a great degree of uncharitable feeling exists, which has on some occasions broken out into acts of open hostility and violence between individuals. A

disgraceful instance was mentioned to me. The editor of an episcopal periodical at Carbo-nier, owing to some severity in his comments either upon the superstitions of the catholics, or the misconduct of some of the father confessors—became peculiarly obnoxious to the members of that sect. They admonished, and finally threatened him with revenge, if he continued his attacks upon the morality of their priests ; but he still continued to assail them, and exposed many cases of gross imposture, fraud and immorality. Instead of resorting to the civil tribunals for redress, (if indeed they did not apprehend further exposure when once drawn into court,) they determined on a different kind of punishment; and the obnoxious editor, having occasion not long after, to pass through an unfrequented wood some miles distant from Harbor Grace, was there way-laid by a gang dressed in the disguise of Indians, and cropped of both his ears ! Attempts were made to detect the authors of this outrage, but without success : and the offending editor having got enough of martyrdom to satisfy his ambition, became quite circumspect on the question of the impiety of the catholics—and they, abundantly



satisfied with what they deemed a *judgment* upon the heresy of their assailant, refrained from all further controversy. And so the matter, after reigning as a nine days wonder, was quietly suffered to rest. Thus much for the freedom of the press in Newfoundland!

There are probably not more than one tenth of the population, who make any pretension to religious faith and worship; the great mass of the population regarding the Sabbath as a day for sports and pastimes, and usually spending it in drunken frolicks and carousals. Early on the morning of the Sabbath, boats may be seen putting off from the neighboring harbors and coves, laden with men, women and children, who meet together at some place agreed upon, to spend the day in recreation. One of their principal means of excitement is a free use of stimulating drinks. The men, women and children partake of it freely. On such occasions, a grand feast of cod's head chowder is usually served up; after which, sports, and sometimes bloody affrays upon the adjacent green ensue, according as the effects of the intoxicating cup are developed; and the evening closes in boisterous songs and uncouth dances, and all the wild uproar



of bacchanalian revelry. The scene closes with a promiscuous prostration upon the floor in drunken stupor. Such is not an unfaithful picture of the manners of the great majority of the lower classes of the inhabitants of Newfoundland. And how is it with the wealthier and more intelligent portions of the same community? There are many individuals here, as there are in all communities, who are patterns of sobriety and morality in their habits and conduct; but candor obliges me to say, that the marks of intemperance are seen in almost every family—and that the principal difference between the high and the low, in respect to habits, is, that while the poor and the unlettered drink their miserable new rum and gin, and lay prostrate in drunkenness, covered with filthy rags, in their dirty houses—the *better sort* of people get fashionably corned on madeira and champaigne, and hide the outward exhibition of shame in their richly decorated saloons! Their wealth gives them the means to get drunk *in style*, while their rank in fashionable society serves to screen their folly from public observation. Should the apostles of temperance in our favored country get out of employment, through

the great reforms which they propose, and have done so much toward accomplishing, they may find labor for a quarter of a century at least, on the rum-cursed and sterile soil of Newfoundland.

The means of education upon the island are scarcely worth the name. Of schools there are but few, and those are chiefly maintained in questionable existence by individual exertion. A great portion of the population are consequently brought up without knowing even the alphabet, and are grossly ignorant and vicious. There are one or more printing establishments on the island ; but the light they scatter is altogether inadequate to pierce the gloom of the barbarism that shrouds the island.

The inhabitants of the interior, are a degenerate race of Indians—corrupted, as the natives always are by their intercourse with the whites. They are composed of the remnants and descendants of two tribes, called Micmacs and Mountaineers—the Micmacs residing in their groups of cabins on plats of table land in rear of the European settlements, and the Mountaineers, as their name indicates, living farther north among the mountains. They are a hardy and athletic race of

savages, resembling the northern and north-western tribes in the United States and Canada. They are extremely jealous and quarrelsome, especially where the *fire-water* has been among them. But their feuds are generally appeased with blows, and bruises, without the shedding of much blood. Revenge, however, is as sweet to them, and as unerringly follows any real injury, as among the rudest savages of the American wilds. These aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland, it is said, were formerly subjected to the Mohawks, one of the most powerful and warlike tribes of the West, and there is a tradition, that until the power of that tribe became extinct, it was a custom with the Indians of Newfoundland to send, at stated periods, a canoe and several men up the St. Lawrence, to pay homage to the chiefs of the Mohawks in Canada. These natives were savage warriors in the time of the French possession of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and unmercifully massacred and scalped whole crews of English vessels wrecked on those dreary and inhospitable coasts.

In the second edition of "*The Great Historical, Geographical, Genealogical and*

*Political Dictionary*," by COLLIER, published in 1701, I find the following account of the Indians of Newfoundland, given by voyagers who visited the island in 1612.

"The Natives habitations were nothing but poles set round and meeting on the top, about ten feet broad, covered with Deer skins, and the fire in the midst. The people are of a middling stature, beardless, broad faced, and delight to paint with Oaker. Some of them went naked, having only their privities covered with a skin. They believed in one God, who created all things, and alledged, that God took a number of arrows and stuck in the ground, from whence men and women first sprung up. One of their *Sagamores* or Governors being asked concerning the Trinity, answered, There was one God, one Son, one Mother, and the Sun, which were four, yet God was above all. And being questioned whether they or their ancestors had heard, that God was come into the world, they said, they had not seen him. Some of them converse visibly with the Devil, who tells them what they must do in war and other matters. *Samuel Chaplain*, gives an account of a feast made by one of their great Lords in his cabin

in 1603, eight or ten kettles of meat, bein<sup>s</sup> set on several fires some yards assunder ; the men sat on both sides the room with dishes of bark. Before the meat was boiled, one took his dog and danced about the kettles, and when he came before the *Sagamore*, threw the dog down ; a second did the like, and after the feast, they danced with the heads of their enemies in their hands, singing all the while. They have many fires in their cabins, ten families sometimes living together, lying upon skins one by another, and their dogs, which resemble our foxes, with them. At another feast the women and maids sat in ranks, the men standing behind singing, and of a sudden the women stript themselves stark naked, without any shame, and their song being ended, cryed with one voice, ho, ho, ho, then covered themselves with their mantles of skins. At 14 or 15 years old their maids have many lovers, and live in impurity with as many of them as they please, for 5 or 6 years, and then takes one of them, whom she likes best, for her husband, provided he be a good hunter, and lives chastely with him, except he forsake her on account of barrenness. They put their dead in a pit with all

their goods, setting many pieces of wood and a red stake over it; they believe the immortality of the soul, and that the dead go into a far country to make merry with their friends. When sick, they send to one *Sagamore Membederton* a conjurer, who prays to the Devils, blows upon the party, cuts him and sucks the blood; he heals wounds in the same manner, applying a round slice of beaver stones, for which they present him with venison or skins. They consult the devil for news, who always answers doubtfully, and sometimes false. He also directs them where to find game when hungry, and if they miss, he excuses it by saying, that the beast changed place; but most times they speed, which makes them believe the devil to be God. The conjurers when they consult, fix a staff in a pit, to which they tie a cord, put their head into the pit, and invoke satan in an unknown language, with so much pain till they sweat again: Then the wizzard persuades the people, that he holds the devil fast with his cord, forcing him to answer; then he sings to his praise for his discovery, which is answered by the savages dancing and singing in a strange tongue; after which they leap over a fire, and put a

pole out of the top of the cabin with something on it which the devil carries away. *Memberton* wore a triangular purse about his neck, with something in it like a nut that he called his spirit."

These Indians of Newfoundland carry on a traffic with the shore inhabitants in furs and peltries, for which they take in exchange articles of food and clothing, necessary for their families. They are very punctual to their engagements. In the spring and fall they bring in their furs, and take a new supply for the ensuing season. The trader extends to them a credit, which they are careful not to lose, as a failure to obtain the accustomed supply, would expose them to suffering, if not starvation. The "credit system" is therefore in full vogue between the English factors and savages of the island, and if the advantage happen there, as elsewhere, to be principally on the side of the creditor, it also serves to save the poor debtor from extreme want and deprivation. There are instances of great wealth accumulated in a few years, by this kind of traffic with the Indians of Newfoundland. There, as every where else, it seems to be the lot of the red man to fall



a prey to the cupidity and avarice of the whites.

Twice a year the merchant ships arrive from England with cargoes of dry goods, groceries, &c. And on the arrival of one of these vessels, the Indians, who are looking for their expected supplies, flock down to the shore, and have a grand holiday. Dances, games, frolic and fun are the order of the day, until the goods are unpacked, and each purchaser receives his half-yearly supply. Happening to be on shore during one of these gala days, a sagamore informed me that there was to be a dance in the evening, and pressed me to join the ring. I declined his invitation, being not over anxious to expose myself to the rude ceremonies of such an occasion. The old fellow was not to be put off, and grasping me round the waist, with rather a herculean squeeze, he carried me into the midst of his company, *nolens volens*. Seeing that he was already under the influence of liquor, and probably not to be trifled with, I thought it the "better part of valor" not to attempt an escape. I did not, I confess, exactly like the company into which I was so unceremoniously thrust, but contrived to put



on as much swagger and *sang froid* as was necessary to enact my part in my new position. I took a seat in one corner of the room to observe the ceremonies of the dance. An old Indian soon took his stand in the middle of the floor. His stature was small, but with a body disproportionably stout and thick. A white blanket hung loosely upon his shoulders—under which a long hempen frock extended down to his knees. He had on a sort of loose trousers of half dressed leather, and buskins of undressed seal-skin. He had a sort of hat upon his head, made of the skin of some sea fowl dressed with the feathers on. In each hand he held a stick some ten or twelve inches in length. Thus accoutred he commenced the evening ceremony by a monotonous song, the words of which were totally unintelligible to my ear, keeping time with his feet, and striking his sticks rapidly together, and producing a prodigious clatter. Ever and anon a loud yell was uttered by the performer, whereupon the whole circle joined in the chorus. The noise and the merriment increased until all were heartily engaged with shuffling feet, and voices strained to the utmost. An hour of these rough and tumultu-

ous sports, was sufficient to satisfy my curiosity, and I left them at their merry making, which was continued far into the night, ending, as usual, in riotous and beastly intoxication.

## CHAPTER III.

Hunting expeditions.—Animals of the chase.—Frauds of the fur-traders.—Englishman's standard of avoirdupois.—Enthusiasm of the hunters.—Excursion to the mountains.—Adventure.—Marriage ceremonies.—Mode of redressing grievances.—Disposition of the inhabitants; their kindness towards one another; their attachment to the Newfoundland dog.

As soon as the fishing season terminates, in the month of October, the inhabitants make preparations for their hunting excursions during the long winter that is to succeed. The forests among the mountains afford shelter for numerous bears, wolves, caribou and foxes. To these retreats the hunters repair in companies of from four to twenty, carrying along with them the provisions necessary to satisfy their hunger, and blankets wherewith to shelter themselves during the long winter nights among the mountains. They hunt during the day, separating at short distances one from another, so as to be within hail in case of emergency. As night approaches, they assemble together, scarcely ever failing to bring in some trophy of the chase. Their

temporary tent is constructed out of the limbs of trees, and bushes bent together, and covered with boughs, and sometimes with banks of snow, scraped out from the flooring of the hut, and thrown up around the rude habitation. A blazing fire is kept in the interior, the smoke of which passes through an aperture left in the top, and the weary hunters, after partaking of refreshment, and thawing off the icicles from their buskins, roll themselves up in their blankets, and lie down to rest upon the pine boughs surrounding their blazing fire. Within four or five days, usually, the party of hunters will have gathered together as many skins of the animals slain as they can well carry, and they then take up their trail homeward. The carcasses of the slain, with the exception of the caribou and bear, are left to be devoured by other animals, that are always prompt to scent the carnage, themselves perhaps to be subjected to a similar fate on the encampment of the next party of hunters in the neighborhood.

It is not necessary, perhaps, for me to give a description of the forest animals of Newfoundland, as they are not dissimilar to those of the northern parts of the United States

and Canada. The black and brown bears of Newfoundland grow to a large size, not unfrequently weighing three or four hundred pounds. The moose and deer, formerly very plenty, are gradually thinning off, and should the industry and zeal of the inhabitants keep pace with the demands of the traders for skins and furs, half a century may not elapse before the wild animals will become as scarce in Newfoundland, as they now are in the middle states of the Union.

In the early settlement of all countries, the fishery and the chase are naturally the chief objects of attraction. The natives being unacquainted with the value of furs, immense quantities are procured from them for articles of little or no value. The exchange which they make of their rude bows and traps for fire arms, also contributed in the early settlements to establish a regular commerce between the Europeans and natives; and gradually those hordes which nature intended for the subsistence of the red man, have perished, race after race, until many of the most noble and majestic animals have become entirely extinct.

Princely fortunes have been amassed by

residents on the shores of Newfoundland, who practised towards the Indians of that island the same frauds and chicanery, which lie at the foundation of the overgrown wealth of some of the fur-trading millionaires in the United States. Many anecdotes illustrating the oppression of the traders towards the natives, were related to me. But the narrative, to those acquainted with the history of our own country, and the wrongs we have systematically inflicted upon the aborigines, need not be recited.—When quite a lad, and living on the borders of one of the most beautiful of American rivers, I used to hear stories told of the traffick of our fathers with the red men, the morality of which I could scarcely comprehend. The untutored savage, eager to possess some trifling bauble, a gun, or perchance a jug of rum, would engage to pay the price in furs, the weight of which was to be ascertained by the Englishman's standard of *avoirdupois*—in which the *hand* of the trader weighs one pound, and his *foot* two! In this species of fur-trading sagacity, the European residents at Newfoundland are not a whit behind their brethren of Yankee land.

Hunters are proverbially fond of recounting their exploits. Like old sailors, who have encountered perils without number, they have long yarns to spin out, whenever they get comfortably seated by a warm fire, with a stiff mug of whiskey, or the never-forgotten pipe of tobacco, to warm them into loquacity. They love to tell children and young people of their hair-breadth-escapes from the claws of the panther or catamount, and from the uncomfortable hug of the huge black bear. I recollect how I used to sit upon the knee and listen to the tales of an old hunter, who settled in the interior of New-Hampshire some seventy years since, and who then had literally no neighbor for many miles, while the territory he had pitched upon, was in the hitherto undisputed possession of catamounts, wild-cats, bears and wolves. His tales are still fresh in my recollection, and they enabled me to tell my share of the stories of hunting adventures, while spending a few hours in the hunter's cabin at Newfoundland.

The enthusiasm of these hunters, and their descriptions of the wild and wooded regions in which they caught their game, excited my curiosity to visit the interior. I prevailed on



one of my companions in the voyage to accompany me in the proposed excursion ; and we started off in high glee towards the rugged hills that lie back some miles from Boone bay. We soon got among the mountain defiles, and taking certain points as land-marks for our return, we plunged into the forest. We passed now and then a jungle of matted firs, where the ravines wound round the base of the hills. Once or twice we got plump into a quagmire at the base of a cliff, where the earth was kept soft and moist by springs issuing from fissures in the rock. But being resolved to ascend so that we could overlook the harbour of Boone bay, we scrambled onward, "over brake and over briar," climbing cliff after cliff, until I grew weary, and threw myself down upon a green spot by the side of a gigantic old trunk of a fir, which perhaps had withstood the blasts of centuries, before it decayed in its branches, and fell like an aged man to mingle with the dust. I know not that I ever saw in this country a specimen of the fir tree at all to be compared with the decaying trunk, on which I was at this time resting and recruiting my strength. Could I have got at them, I would have count-



ed the grains, and marked the exact age of this old settler in the forests of Newfoundland.

But while I was thus musing, my companion, more agile, or less fatigued than myself, pushed onward, and had gone entirely beyond the reach of my voice. I followed with as good grace as I could for a laggard ; but could hear no sound in answer to my oft repeated calls, except the reverberation of the echoes—and these, amid the solitudes of a forest, only serve to make the traveller feel more sensibly his loneliness. I began to fear that my companion, or myself, were out of the course of the trail we had agreed to follow, but at length, on emerging from the skirt of the forest surrounding the height which we had marked out for our ascent, I discovered my comrade quietly resting on the summit of the mountain, which he had reached an hour before me. Beyond this height, which was perhaps five or six hundred feet above the level of the bay, we had not the courage to venture. The scenery about us, was exceedingly wild. The mountains are piled together in apparent disorder, overlapping and abutting upon each other. In front of us, we had the harbor in full view, and the houses of the

inhabitants. Here and there was to be seen a patch of beautiful green pasturage—and abroad through the gorges of the mountains were seen the dark foliage of the evergreens, through which the lofty birch reared upward its white trunk, overtopping the dense mass of green beneath. A sort of stunted or scraggy mountain alders bristled upon the edges of the precipices—all the trees lessening in size, the higher upward they were noticed among the mountains. For miles in the interior, these mountains lay one above another, and on the summits of those most distant, snow and ice continue from year to year, perhaps from age to age.

From the time of our departure, we had not noticed a wild animal of any description, although we were directly in the usual trail of the hunters ; and we began to think there could not be much sport in the neighborhood after all, and were glad that we had not encumbered ourselves with fire-arms. Good and trusty knives, each of us had, and we were as valiant as most men usually are out of the reach of danger. The day now began to wane, and we started homeward ; but had proceeded a few hundred yards only, when

we heard a rushing among the bushes, and cracking of sticks, as of some wild animal, hovering on our path, to take advantage of our want of deadly preparation. We now began to fear foul play—and to concert plans of operation—for there was evidently some enemy near, whom it was our duty to circumvent if possible. Take him, we could not, if he should happen to prove one of the brown bears of the island, for they are good fighters, having an instinctive dislike to the biped race; and unless better skilled than we then were in the use of the knife, he would probably have mastered a couple such as we were. My comrade grew pale with affright, and stepping close up to me, and asking in a low voice, “if we had not better *scratch gravel?*” he actually took to his heels, like one bereft of his wits, before I had time to reply to his ludicrous question. Over the rocks, down precipices, and through the bushes, my friend sped as fast as his legs would carry him, looking neither to the right nor left, until some half mile onward, his foot tripping, he pitched headlong into a quagmire!—I was so diverted with his consternation and flight that I had no leisure to be frightened myself, and

by the time I overtook him, all danger was past, if indeed there had been any. My friend's dress was a light gray, and at a distance so very nearly resembled the color of the bushes, that I could distinguish nothing but his broad-brimmed tarpaulin as he dashed away through the thickets. When I came up with him, I found he had crawled out from his miry bed, a good deal more frightened than hurt. After cleansing himself as well as he could from the mud and filth, and poking out his tarpaulin from the mire, we jogged on towards the harbour, and soon had about us a company of jovial fellows, making themselves merry at our expense.

The reader of these pages will perceive, that I do not attempt any thing like a regular journal of travels and adventures. This at best would be dry and uninteresting. Neither can it be expected, that during a residence of a few weeks on such an island as Newfoundland, I should be able to add materially to the mass of information already before the world. My object is to give my impressions of scenes that passed under my observation, and convey to the reader a faithful delineation of the general appearance of

the island, and the manners and customs of the inhabitants. I am encouraged to do this, in the hope that it may prove of some trifling benefit to the public, inasmuch as there are in all the published accounts which I have seen respecting Newfoundland, great inaccuracy and imperfection.

Among all nations, savage or civilized, some sort of ceremony has usually attended their marriage contracts. None are so debased but they deem some formality and publicity necessary ; and in proportion as the parties are civilized and enlightened, has the rite become sacred, and been solemnized by the sanctions of religion. The shore inhabitants of this island, as has already been seen, are far from being enlightened ; yet they consider that no marriage would be binding, unless the customary formality attended it, although the presence of a magistrate or ecclesiastic is by no means deemed essential. When the young couple have agreed upon the nuptial ceremony, the prevailing custom here is to give an entertainment, at which all who hear of the preparations, consider themselves invited. At the time appointed, some one of the number, who has a goodly pres-

ence, and suitable voice, is selected to perform the office of clergyman. He is decked out with clothes resembling those of an English curate in full dress, and puts on a mock gravity for the occasion. The parties and witnesses being all arranged about the room, the officiating parson enters with a stately step, and enjoining strict silence and attention upon the company, proceeds to join the young candidates in matrimonial bonds. This is generally done in words similar to those in use amongst us. The mock parson concludes the ceremony by a long extempore address, touching the various duties of the marriage state, usually delivered in a vein of broad humor, that very often ends in loud and boisterous merriment. Should the parson prove dull and uninteresting in this part of the ceremony, he becomes the subject of the rude jests of the company; and, on the contrary, should he carry his coarse jokes too far, so as to offend the not over-scrupulous delicacy of the females present, they fall upon him, and strip him of his clerical robes, which is looked upon as a sort of signal for all sorts of fun and revelry. As was the fashion in the by-gone days of New-England, the guests par-



take freely of intoxicating liquors ; and a feast is served up at the conclusion, composed of such delicacies as the ability of the parties enables them to provide—generally a cod's-head chowder, or boiled salmon, roasted venison, or raccoon. The concluding part of the ceremony would be considered highly improper amongst a better educated people—but is nevertheless a common custom on the island. As soon as the married pair have retired to rest, as many of the guests as are fond of the sport, prepare themselves with small bags, ten or fifteen inches in length, into which they pour a quantity of peas or beans, and with these in their hands, they burst into the room, and dance round the bridal bed, shaking their bags of peas, and sometimes beating them with sticks, and singing coarse and vulgar songs. The ordeal is one which the young married folks would gladly avoid—but custom among such a rude people is stronger than law. They must bear the infliction patiently ; and the night often wears away before their tormenters get tired of the revelry, and wend their way homeward.

Rude as are these ceremonies, the inhabitants look upon them as binding—and as sa-

credly regard their covenants made under such sanctions, as though made under the forms of civil or ecclesiastical law. The reader will understand, that the customs I have been describing are those of the shore inhabitants of Newfoundland—a mixed population of all nations, generally very ignorant, but living together in comparative peace and regularity, without the ordinances or observances of religion or of law. A great portion of their time is spent either upon the water, or in the forests; and the instinct of self-preservation, and certain regulations as to hunting and fishing, which all savages as well as enlightened people tacitly submit to, keep them in a state of general quiet and good neighborhood. They are naturally kind and hospitable towards one another—are by no means deficient in natural sagacity—and need only the steady and sure aids of cultivation and of religious instruction, to make them as useful and respectable as the wealthy traders and factors, who come from Europe to spend a few years on the island, and grow rich upon the labors and industry of these poor people.

The reader should not be led to suppose, from the facts here stated, that Newfoundland



is without law. On the contrary, the mother country, here as elsewhere in all her possessions, maintains her power. But the natives of the interior, and the shore inhabitants of whom we have been speaking, are called upon neither to pay taxes nor tithes; and so long as they refrain from public violence and interference with the wealthier and aristocratic classes—so long as they are content to be peaceable hewers of wood and drawers of water to the “upper ranks in society”—and submit to the exactions of the traders—they are let alone by the authorities both in church and state! It is a rare thing to see a civil magistrate leaving his stately dwelling in St. Johns, or Placentia, to go among these rude people, to protect the innocent, or punish the guilty. It might soil the ermine of these dignitaries to come in contact with these poor fishermen, and skin-clad hunters! They are consequently left to settle their own disputes in their own way, without interference or oversight on the part of the magistracy. An armed sloop is, however, annually sent round to the different ports of the island, having admiralty officers and acting magistrates on board, who make inquiries into the state of public affairs—and

this show of governmental supervision is the extent in most cases of their public superintendence. Whenever disputes arise among the inhabitants, that are not otherwise settled, or explained, to the satisfaction of the parties and their friends, a regular *knock-down* ensues, in which he who is stoutest wins the cause—but the conquerer is sometimes obliged to “foot the bill of costs,” by giving the vanquished party and the witnesses attending, as much liquor as they choose to drink! Black eyes, and broken heads, are consequently matters of no very rare occurrence.

In their families and intercourse with one another, these people are kind, companionable, and benevolent. In cases of sickness, or difficulty of any kind, they will go miles to watch by the bedside of a suffering friend, or to aid him in any time of want or peril. The stranger approaching their habitations, is always welcomed with kindness, and if his deportment among them is exemplary, they urge him to prolong his stay, and kindly offer to instruct him in all the mysteries of fishing and the chase.

They are extravagantly fond of the canine race—and the noble animal known as the

Newfoundland dog, may be said to be almost necessary to their existence. Every family has one or more of them. He is an inmate of the hut, and fares almost as well as the children of the family. Whenever the little ones go to their sports, the dog accompanies them, watches them while at play, and escorts them safely home. Should one of the little urchins fall into the water, the dog will rescue him from drowning; and the habits and services of the faithful animal endear him to every inhabitant of the island. This dog, of the genuine Newfoundland breed, has a remarkably pleasing countenance, is exceedingly docile, and of great size and sagacity. They are so strong, that the inhabitants often yoke them in pairs to a light sledge, and in the winter haul their wood from the forests three or four miles in the interior. In the performance of this task, they are so expert as to need no drivers. After having delivered their load, they will return to the woods if their masters remain, and are then rewarded with something to eat. The feet of this dog are more palmated than those of other species, which structure enables it to swim very fast, to dive easily, and bring up any

thing from the bottom of the water. It is, indeed, almost as fond of the water as if it were an amphibious animal. So sagacious is it, and so prompt in lending assistance, that it has saved the lives of numberless persons, who were on the point of drowning ; and this circumstance, together with its uniform good temper, has justly rendered it a universal favorite.

Innumerable anecdotes are related of the sagacity of the Newfoundland dog, one of which I will mention. A short time before I visited the island, a little child belonging to a family living but a few rods distant from the shore, strayed away and climbed up on one of the fish stages, that are built to overhang the water, so that in dressing the fish the offals may be swept off into the sea. The little fellow in running about on the stage, accidentally fell off into the water, where it was twelve feet deep. The old dog, who had been snoozing away upon the shore, the instant he heard the splash in the water, jumped in after the child, and seizing it by its clothes, dragged the little sufferer out of the water, and leaving it, ran to the door of the house, and setting up a dismal howl, at once

alarmed the mother of the child. Following the dog, who bounded back to the object of its care, she found that her child was saved, and clasped him to her bosom.

## CHAPTER IV.

Extent of the fisheries.—Rights of the Americans.—Tribute to the character of New-England fishermen.—Herring fishery.—Cod fishery upon the banks.—Coast and shore fisheries.—Statistics.—Graves of fishermen.

The fishery, covering the banks which surround the island of Newfoundland, the coasts of New-England, Nova Scotia, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Labrador, furnishes the richest treasure, and the most beneficent tribute that the ocean pays to earth. By the pleasure of the Creator, it has been constituted one fishery, extending in the open seas that surround that island to little less than five degrees of latitude from the coast, spreading along the whole northern coast of this continent, and insinuating itself into all the bays, creeks and harbors, to the very borders of the shores. For the full enjoyment of an equal share in the fishery, it is necessary to have a nearly general access to every part of it. The habits of the game which it pursues being so far migratory, that they are found at

different periods most abundant at different places, sometimes populating the banks, and at others swarming close upon the shores. The latter portion of the fishery, however, has always been considered as the most valuable, inasmuch as it affords the means of drying and curing the fish immediately after they are caught, which cannot be effected upon the banks.

By the law of nature, this fishery belonged to the inhabitants of the regions in the neighborhood of which it was situated. By the conventional law of Europe, it belonged to the European nations which had formed settlements in these regions. France, as the first principal settler in them, long claimed the exclusive right to it. Great-Britain, at length, moved in no small degree by the value of the fishery itself, made conquest of all those regions from France, and limited by treaty within a narrow compass the right of France to any share in the fishery. Spain, under some claim of prior discovery, for some time enjoyed a share of the fishery upon the banks, but renounced it prior to the American revolution.

The right of the Americans to a participation in these fisheries is as sacred as that of



the subjects of Great Britain. By an act of parliament, passed during the reign of Edward VI. in 1547, the Newfoundland fishery was declared an unlicensed fishery, free to all the inhabitants of the realm. The war of our revolution did not abrogate the right; or if it did, the treaty of 1783 expressly recognized and acknowledged it. It is a right of inestimable value to the people of the United States. According to Seybert's Statistics, in 1807, there were more than seventy thousand tons of American shipping employed in the cod-fishery alone. In that and the four preceding years, according to the same writer, the exports from the United States of the proceeds of the fisheries, averaged three millions of dollars a year. In 1816, soon after the war, there were upwards of sixty-eight thousand tons employed, and in 1836, more than a hundred thousand. These fishing vessels are navigated by the hardiest, most skilful and best mariners in the world. Every person, (says Dr. Seybert) on board our fishing vessels, has an interest in common with his associates; their reward depends upon their industry and enterprise.

To the immense number of men engaged



in these employments, and to their wives and children, the cod-fishery is their daily bread, their property, their subsistence. To how many thousands more are the dangers and labors of their lives subservient? Their game is not only food and raiment to themselves, but to millions of other human beings.

One of the most distinguished of American statesmen pays the following glowing tribute to the fishermen of America. "There is something in the very occupation of fishermen, not only beneficent in itself, but noble and exalted in the qualities of which it requires the habitual exercise. In common with the cultivators of the soil, their labors contribute to the subsistence of mankind, and they have the merit of continual exposure to danger, superadded to that of unceasing toil. Industry, frugality, patience, perseverance, fortitude, intrepidity, souls inured to perpetual conflict with the elements, and bodies steeled with unremitting action, ever grappling with danger, and familiar with death—these are the properties to which the fisherman of the ocean is formed by the daily labors of his life. These are the properties for which He who knew what was in man, the

Saviour of mankind, sought his first, and found his most faithful, ardent, and undaunted disciples, among the fishermen of his country. In the deadliest rancours of national wars, the examples of later ages have been frequent of exempting, by the common consent of the most exasperated enemies, fishermen from the operation of hostilities. Nor is their devotion to their country less conspicuous than their usefulness to their kind. While the huntsman of the ocean, far from his native land, from his family, and his fire-side, pursues, at the constant hazard of his life, his game upon the bosom of the deep, the desire of his heart is, by the nature of his situation, ever intently turned towards his home, his children, and his country. To be lost to them, gives their keenest edge to his fears; to return with the fruits of his labors to them, is the object of all his hopes.

“By no men upon earth have these qualities and dispositions been more constantly exemplified than by the fishermen of New-England. From the proceeds of their perilous and hardy industry, millions have been added to the exports of the United States. This is in fact, so much national wealth cre-

ated by the fishery. With what branch of our commerce is it unconnected? Into what artery or vein of our political body does it not circulate wholesome blood? To what sinew of our national arm has it not imparted firmness and energy? The fishermen during our late war were upon the ocean, and upon the lakes, fighting the battles of their country. Turn back to the records of the revolution—ask Samuel Tucker, himself one of the number, a living example of the character common to them all, what were the fishermen of New-England, in the tug of war for independence? Appeal to the heroes of all our naval wars—ask the vanquishers of Algiers and Tripoli—ask the redeemers of our citizens from the chains of servitude, and of our nation from the humiliation of annual tribute to the barbarians of Africa—call on the champions of our last struggle with Britain—ask Hull, and Bainbridge—ask Stewart, Porter and Macdonough, what proportion of New-England fishermen were the companions of their victories, and sealed the proudest of our triumphs with their blood!”

It has been justly observed, that he who draws a cod fish from the sea, gives a piece

of silver to his country. The effect of the fisheries upon the trade and wealth of the country, and the influence it has upon its destinies, are not generally understood or realized. As a nursery for seamen, its influence has already been seen in the character of our navy—and an inspection of the annual tonnage statements of the treasury, will show what a mine of wealth these fisheries are to the Union.

The shores, the creeks, the inlets of the Bay of Fundy, the Bay of Chaleurs, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Straits of Bellisle, and the Coast of Labrador, appear to have been designed by the God of Nature as the great ovarium of fish:—the inexhaustible repository of this species of food, not only for the supply of the American, but of the European continent. At the proper season, to catch them in endless abundance, little more of effort is needed, than to bait the hook and pull the line, and occasionally even this is not necessary. In clear weather, near the shores, myriads are visible, and the strand is at times almost literally paved with them.

The *herring fishery* is one of the different branches of business on the coasts of New-

foundland and Labrador, subsidiary, however, to the other and more productive employments of the fishermen. Of all migrating fish, the herring take the most adventurous voyages. They are found in the greatest abundance in the high northern latitudes. The quantity of insect food which the northern seas provide is very great, whence, in that remote situation, and defended by the rigour of the climate, they live and multiply beyond expression. They annually appear about the bays and harbours of Newfoundland by the middle of May, usually in myriads. The water seems alive with them, and their phalanx, in extent, depth, and closeness, sometimes covers an extent of shore as broad as the island itself. Sometimes they sink for the space of five or ten minutes, then rise again to the surface, and in bright weather, reflect a variety of splendid colors, like a field bespangled with purple, gold and azure. The herring are pursued by hordes of enemies, that thin off their squadrons. The fin fish and the cacholet swallow barrels at a yawn; the porpoise, the grampus, the shark, and the whole numerous tribe of dog-fish, when the shoals of herring appear, cease their war up-

on each other, and make them an easy prey. Flocks of sea-fowl are also seen to hover over them, and destroy great numbers. The herring thus pursued, crowd close together, like sheep when frightened, and endeavor to save themselves by approaching the shores, and sometimes filling the bays, inlets and harbours. The fishermen, watching their progress, are prepared to give them a proper reception, and by nets made for the purpose, take hundreds of barrels at a draught. These shoals of herring appear in the spring and fall; those taken in the latter season, in August and September, being usually barrelled and preserved. The spring herring are principally taken to be used for bait in the cod-fishery.

The *Bank Fishery* is carried on in vessels generally from 60 to 100 tons burthen and manned with eight or ten men each. They commence their voyages early in March, and continue in this employment until the last of October, in which time they make two and sometimes three fares to the United States, bringing their fish home to be cured. The produce of their trips, if successful, after paying the shoresmen the expense of making

or curing, generally furnishes a sufficient quantity of dried fish to load the vessel for Europe. Those vessels employed in the cod fishery require cables of from 160 to 180 fathoms in length. They must always keep their sails bent to the yards, so as to be ready in case of accident to the cable, or any of those adverse occurrences to which tempests or the casualties incident to anchoring nearly in mid ocean, must expose them. They purchase salted clams for bait, which they procure at considerable expense, and take with them from the port whence they sail. They fish night and day, when they find the fish to bite well, which is not always the case, and haul their cod in a depth of water of 40 to 60 fathoms. The length of the cod seldom exceeds three feet, and the conformity of its organs is such as to render it nearly indifferent to the choice of its food. The voracity of its appetite prompts it to swallow indiscriminately almost every substance which it is capable of gorging; glass and even iron have been found in its stomach; and by inverting itself it has the power of discharging those indigestible contents. During our fishing on the coast, we often noticed hard substances



found in the stomach of the cod. Our supply of fresh bait being nearly exhausted on one occasion, an Irishman on board expressed great concern, as our success had not been very encouraging; "for, said he, "the fish of the straits, be a very different animal from those of the owld counthry, for they will bite the hook." "Ah, Pat; but will they bite without bait?" said the captain. "Ah, indade ye wasn't after thinking the Irish cod fools enough for that, was ye!" replied Patrick, and proceeded to explain his apparent blunder, concluding it was best after all to "put on the shiners."

The business of fishing is reduced to a regular system. The fishermen range themselves along the sides of the vessel, each person being provided with lines and hooks. On my first essay at fishing, I proceeded to tie on my hooks. An old fisherman perceiving the awkward manner in which I was proceeding, told me the "cod would laugh at such a craft as I was fixing." I threw it aside, a little vexed, and told him I would not be the laughing stock of the fish and fishermen, too; and that if they wanted me to work, they must fix me out with a craft. I was told, however, that it was



the duty of each one to provide his own fishing gear. After some little delay, the old fisherman kindly initiated me into the mysteries of the "hook and line," and by this time I found out that there was something more to do than "just to tie it on."

After catching fish upon the banks, they are headed and opened by the fishermen, who place them in the hold of the vessel in an uncured, and consequently in some degree in a partially perishing state ; and after having obtained a fare, they return with it to the United States, to be cured or dried, and prepared for exportation. Before this can be done or they can be landed, the fish is generally more or less deteriorated, becomes softer, and part of it makes an inferior quality of fish, called Jamaica fish. The proportion of this is much greater than it would be, were the fish dried and cured shortly after being taken, as is the case with the Coast and Bay fisheries.

The *Coast and Labrador Fisheries* are prosecuted in vessels of from 40 to 120 tons burthen, carrying a number of men, according to their respective sizes, in about the same proportion as the vessels on the Banks. They commence their voyages in May, and get on

the fishing ground about the first of June, before which time bait cannot be obtained. This bait is furnished by a small species of fish called capling, which strike in shore at that season of the year, and are usually followed by immense shoals of cod fish, which feed upon them. Each vessel selects its own fishing ground, along the coast of the Bay of Chaleurs, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Straits of Bellisle, the coast of Labrador, even as far as Cumberland Island, and the entrance of Hudson's Bay, thus improving a fishing ground reaching in extent over twenty three degrees of latitude.

In choosing their situation, the fishermen generally seek some sheltered and safe harbor or cove, where they anchor in about six or eight fathoms water, unbend their sails, stowing them away below, and literally making themselves at home. They dismantle their vessels, and convert them into habitations, at least as durable, and perhaps as comfortable, as those of the ancient Scythians. They then cast a net over the stern of the vessel, in which, from day to day, a sufficient number of capling are caught to supply them with bait. Each vessel is supplied with boats, in number

varying according to the size of the vessel and number of men, each boat manned by two men. They leave the vessel early in the morning, and seek the best or a sufficiently good spot for fishing, which is frequently found within a few yards of the vessel, and very rarely more than one or two miles distant. Here they usually haul the fish, as fast as they can pull their lines; and sometimes the fish have been found so abundant that they could be scooped into the boat without even hook or line. There is no prey of which the cod seems to be so fond as the capling. It is a beautiful little fish, from four to six inches in length, of bright silver color and weighing from one to three ounces. According to the plenty or scarcity of those capling do the fishermen prognosticate the result of their labors. Wherever they appear in schools, the cod is sure to follow in vast numbers—and they have been known to pursue the capling in such quantities and with such voracity, as to run in large numbers quite out of the water on to the shores. The boats return to the vessel about nine o'clock in the morning to breakfast, put their fish on board, salt and split them, and after having

fished for several days, in which time the salt has struck sufficiently into the fish first caught, they carry them on shore and spread and dry them on the rocks or temporary flakes. This routine is followed every day, with the addition of attending to such as have been spread, and carrying on board and storing away those that have become sufficiently cured, until the vessel is filled with dried fish fit for an immediate market, which is generally the case by the middle or last of August. The vessel is then put in trim for the homeward voyage, and proceeds directly to her destined port. The fish thus caught and cured are esteemed the best in the markets.

Some of the fishermen cure a part of their fish as they catch them, on the beach, rocks, &c. and the rest after they return home. And there are many cargoes of dry fish shipped yearly from the coast of Labrador direct for Europe. The usual markets for these fish are in the Mediterranean, where they prefer small fish, and the greater part of all the fish taken up the bay and near Labrador are very small.

Besides the vessels of larger tonnage which I have already mentioned as engaged in the

fisheries, there is also a description of vessels called jiggers, or small schooners, of from 30 to 45 tons, and carrying four or five hands, that fish in the south channel, on the shoals and Cape Sables. There is still another description of fishing vessels, commonly called Chebacco Boats, or Pink Sterns, of from 10 to 28 tons, carrying two men and a boy each. Both these classes fish for the home market and the West Indies, except the very first they take early in the spring, which being of very superior quality are usually sent to the markets in Spain, where they always bring a great price.

There are also great numbers of vessels employed in the mackerel, shad and salmon fishing. And a late writer estimating the number of American vessels of all descriptions employed in these fisheries and their annual produce, gives the following result :

Whole number of vessels,	2,332
Measuring            tons,	115,940
Number of men employed	15,059
Salt consumed        hhds.	265,370
Quantity of fish taken and cured,	
quintals,	1,353,700
Barrels of oil made	50,520

Barrels of mackerel taken, 50,000

The facts which I have here taken some pains to embody in relation to the fishing interests of New-England, will serve to give the reader an idea of their great value and importance to the country. I trust the account has not proved uninteresting to the reader.

Great numbers of fishermen have lost their lives in their perilous occupation on these coasts by being overtaken by sudden squalls while out in their boats, or driven by gales far out to sea beyond the reach of succor. At a little distance back from Boone harbor, is a burial ground appropriated to the sepulture of those foreigners who have perished on the coast, and whose bodies were recovered from the ocean. An old weather-beaten board, nailed to the trunk of a fir tree, marks the place of burial; and I noticed there were inscriptions upon it, nearly defaced, representing the names and ages of some of the poor fishermen whose remains reposed near the spot. One or more graves were marked by a rude cross, erected by some relative or friend, designating the catholic faith of the individual whose death it commemorated.

## CHAPTER V.

Departure from Boone bay.—Mound near Shallow bay.—  
Little settlement at Cowhead.—Sails set for Labrador.—  
Straits of Bellisle.—Islands of ice; their appearance and vast  
extent.—First view of the Labrador coast.—Sterility of the  
soil.—Vegetable Productions.—Esquimaux burial place.—  
Ancient custom towards the sick.

After two weeks successful operation in fishing in the neighborhood of Boone bay, the capling becoming less plenty, we found it necessary to leave. Accordingly we took a tug at the "crooked iron," and made out to sea. In about eight hours we reached Shallow bay, thirty miles distant and came again to anchor. Our stay here was to be brief, and I hurried off to the shore to make observations. At Cowhead, a little distance from the bay, are a few small huts, inhabited by fishermen. Beyond these and southerly facing the shore, are a few acres of low land, covered with rank grass. Pursuing my way and passing a point of rocks jutting out from the shore, I noticed a sort of mound or embankment, a short distance inland, very much resembling some of



those Indians mounds which are found near the banks of the Ohio river. The embankment is about fifteen feet above the level of the water, nearly level upon the top, and thirty or forty feet in width ; in length it stretches away several hundred feet, and connects with a narrow isthmus that forms a communication between Cowhead and the main land. It thus forms two bays, or harbors, one of which we were moored in, Shallow bay, and the other St Paul's bay.

On Cowhead there were at the time of my visit, eighteen inhabitants. One family has resided on this spot for forty years. An aged couple, patriarchs of their little flock, reared a large family, who have settled around them, and live by fishing and hunting. They have this little world entirely to themselves. No one molests them—nobody intrudes upon their society ; and they know neither the distinctions which others of their race are striving for, nor care for the wealth which is so eagerly coveted by the mass of mankind. The forests and the deep furnish them with food and raiment ; and, with plenty always before them, they have few wants, and are blessed with almost uninterrupted health, and



long life. They are uncultivated and entirely uneducated. Not one of them can read or write, and their language is consequently rude. But they are ingenious in every thing concerning the chase and the fishery, and in the dressing of the skins of wild animals, which they use for purposes of dress.

On the 27th of June, we set sail again, directing our course across the Straits of Bellefleur towards Labrador. The wind being fair, and the weather pleasant, our passage proved delightful. The prevailing winds having for some weeks been northerly, the straits were full of masses of ice, some of immense size, and towering up like mountains, rendering our passage at times quite dangerous. These floating islands of ice, called icebergs, are objects of great interest to the beholder. Of the most fantastic forms, and splendid colors as seen from the refraction of the sun's light, the voyager gazes upon them as they wheel slowly by his little vessel, with intense interest.

The ice which obstructs the navigation of the arctic seas (says a late writer) consists of two very different kinds; the one produced by the congelation of fresh, and the other by that of salt water. In those inhospitable

tracts, the snow which annually falls on the islands or continents, being again dissolved by the progress of the summer's heat, pours forth numerous rills and limped streams, which collect along the indented shores, and in the deep bays enclosed by precipitous rocks. There, this clear and gelid water soon freezes, and every successive year supplies an additional investing crust, till, after the lapse, perhaps, of several centuries, the icy mass rises at last to the size and aspect of a mountain, commensurate with the elevation of the surrounding cliffs. The melting of the snow, which is afterwards deposited on such enormous blocks, likewise contributes to their growth; and, by filling up the accidental holes or crevices, it renders the whole structure compact and uniform. Meanwhile the principle of destruction has already begun its operations. The ceaseless agitation of the sea gradually wears and undermines the base of the icy mountain, till at length, by the action of its own accumulated weight, when it has perhaps attained an altitude of a thousand, or even two thousand feet, it is torn from its frozen chains, and precipitated, with a tremendous plunge, into the abyss below.

This mighty launch now floats like a lofty island on the ocean ; till, driven southwards by winds and currents, it insensibly wastes and dissolves away in the wide Atlantic.

Such I conceive to be the real origin of the icy mountains, or *icebergs*, entirely similar in their formation to the glaciers which occur on the flanks of the Alps and the Pyrennees. They consist of a clear, compact and solid ice, which has the fine green tint verging to blue, which ice or water, when very pure, and of a sufficient depth, always assumes. From the cavities of these icebergs, the crews of the northern whalers are accustomed, by means of a hose, or flexible tube of canvass, to fill their casks easily with the purest and softest water. Of the same species of ice, the fragments which are picked up as they float upon the surface of the ocean, yield the adventurous navigator the most refreshing beverage.

It was long disputed among the learned, whether the waters of the ocean are capable of being congealed, and many frivolous and absurd arguments, of course, were advanced to prove the impossibility of the fact. But the freezing of sea water is established both

by observation and experiment. The product, however, is an imperfect sort of ice, easily distinguished from the result of a regular crystallization : it is porous, and incompact. It consists of spicular shoots, or thin flakes, which detain within their interstices the stronger brine ; and its granular spongy texture has, in fact, the appearance of congealed syrup, or what the confectioners call *water-ice*. This saline ice can, therefore, never yield pure water ; yet if the strong brine imprisoned in it be first suffered to drain off slowly, the loose mass that remains will melt into a brackish liquid, which in some cases may be deemed fit for use.

The fields and other collections of floating ice are often discovered at a great distance, by that singular appearance on the verge of the horizon, which the Dutch seamen term *ice-blink*.

It is a stratum of liquid whiteness evidently occasioned by the glare of light reflected obliquely from the surface of the ice against the opposite atmosphere. This shining streak, which looks always brightest in clear weather, indicates, to the experienced navigator, twenty or thirty miles beyond the limit of

direct vision, not only the extent and figure, but even the quality of the ice. The blink from packs of ice, appears of a pure white, while that which is occasioned by snow fields has some tinge of yellow.

The mountains of hard and perfect ice are the gradual production, perhaps, of many centuries. Along the western coast of Greenland, they form an immense rampart, which presents to the mariner a sublime spectacle, resembling at a distance, whole groups of churches, mantling castles, or fleets under full sail. Every year, especially in hot seasons, they are partially detached from their seats, and whelmed into the deep sea. In Davis' Strait, those icebergs appear the most frequent; and about Disco bay, where the soundings exceed 300 fathoms, masses of such enormous dimensions are met with, that the Dutch seamen compare them to cities, and often bestow on them the familiar names of Amsterdam and Haerlem. They are carried towards the Atlantic by the current which generally flows from the northeast, and after they reach the warmer water of the lower latitudes they rapidly dissolve, and finally disappear, probably in the space of a few months.

The blocks of fresh water ice appear black as they float ; but show a fine emerald or beryl hue when brought upon the deck. Though perfectly transparent, like crystal, they sometimes enclose threads or streamlets of air-bubbles, extricated in the act of congelation. This pure ice, being only a fifteenth part lighter than fresh water, must consequently project about one tenth as it swims on the sea. An iceberg of 2000 feet in height would therefore, after it floated, still rise 200 feet above the surface of the water. Such perhaps may be considered as nearly the extreme dimensions. Those mountains of ice may even require more elevation at a distance from land, both from the snow which falls on them, and from the copious vapors which precipitate and congeal on their surface. But in general they are carried forward by the current which sets from the northeast into the Atlantic, where, bathed in a warmer fluid, they rapidly waste and dissolve. Though large bodies of ice are often found near the banks of Newfoundland, they seldom advance much farther, or pass beyond the 48th degree of latitude.

Bellisle island is situated opposite the north

east end of Newfoundland, about equidistant from that and Labrador. It is about twenty miles in circuit, naked and barren, and destitute of inhabitants. The shores are bold and rocky, and in some places precipitous, having an appearance of basaltic formation. Shipwrecks have frequently occurred on this island during the dense fogs that at times enshroud it. About five years since an American schooner, benighted in the fog, struck on the rocks, and went down in less than thirty minutes, the crew having barely time to escape with their lives, which they did by clinging to the rocks, and ultimately reaching the shore above. Here they wandered about several days, unable to procure food, except a few roots and herbs with which they contrived to appease their hunger. The season was rigorous, and they had no clothing save the dresses they had on when shipwrecked, and those were miserably torn in their struggle to ascend the rocks. After remaining some days at this island, and almost despairing of rescue, they succeeded in attracting the notice of a fishing vessel, passing through the straits, and were saved from a miserable death.



At the distance of two or three leagues, the coast of Labrador has an appearance of much regularity and evenness, and the dwarfish shrubbery gives it at such a distance some resemblance to a productive and fertile region. But, on nearing the coast, all impressions of this sort vanish, and we behold a dreary and barren coast, unmarked by any thing that looks like fertility in any direction. The peninsula of Labrador is between eight and nine hundred miles square, and lies between the 50th and 60th degrees of north latitude. It is bounded southerly by Canada and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; on the east by the Atlantic ocean; on the north by Hudson's straits, and on the west by Hudson's Bay. It was discovered in 1496, by some Portuguese navigators, who named it *Terra de Labrador*, or "Ploughman's land," a designation to which it seems to have very little title.

The whole of this extensive country, as far as it has been explored, is found to be extremely barren and dreary, the surface every where uneven, and covered with large stones; the mountains devoid of herbage, and producing at best but a little moss, or a few blight-



ed shrubs : and the valleys, in some places, full of low crooked trees of the pine and birch species. The southern parts present some appearance of soil that might be improved for cultivation, and near some of the deep bays a little timber may be found ; but the prevailing aspect of the whole region is a heap of bare and frightful rocks. The highest mountains extend along the eastern coast, but their elevation is not very great—no where exceeding 3000 feet. There are vast chains of lakes and ponds throughout the country ; but they are not deserving the name of rivers, and are nothing more than the drains from the lakes and ponds of the interior, running on a bed of solid rock, sometimes broad, but rarely of any depth. The climate is extremely rigorous, the winter lasting about nine months, or from the middle of September to the middle of June.

The coast of Labrador is remarkable for its bold and precipitous shores. At a place called Lancellen, so named from its natural position, the shore is a bold and precipitous rock formation, two hundred feet or more in height above the water, and extending for some miles on the coast. This bold height is

surmounted by a wide extent of table land, covered in some places with a peat moss, having resemblance at a distance to green clover, but is worthless, and only covers a cold, barren and thin soil. An arm of the sea puts up between two cliffs on the southerly coast, on the right of which stands a signal house, occupied by the British during the last war. Near this are the crumbling remains of an old fort, forming nearly a semi-circle, near which a rude monument pointed out the graves of twelve persons there buried.

Noticing the very superficial covering of earth beneath which the mouldering bones of these dead men were deposited, I was led to inquire into the reason for such a seeming neglect of suitable burial. The cause was explained to me, when I was told that the soil, on that part of the coast, was scarcely in any place found to be more than eighteen to twenty-four inches deep. The whole peninsula seems to be composed of a solid mass of stone, with only a thin stratum of earth, gathered upon its surface during the lapse of ages. I was told that in some instances the dead have been carried miles, in order to find some little hollow, in which the earth was deeper,

or where a thicker covering could be scraped together to form the resting place of the departed. This may have led to the custom of the natives in that country in burying their dead. I visited an Esquimaux tomb in one of the bays of Labrador. It was located upon a little island in the bay, formed by the flood tide. At the ebb, I could reach it without wetting my feet. The sepulchre was composed of a rude pile of stones placed together so as to have a large cavity beneath, and the top being covered by a tall rank grass or sea weed. After removing two tiers of the stone, I could see the bleached and mouldering remains of many of the islanders, in all the various stages of decay. Whole families, one after another answering the final summons, may have been thrown into this rude burial place.

Among the Esquimaux I was told of another custom that formerly prevailed, though, since the intercourse of Europeans with them, it has in a measure been overcome. This was, whenever one of the aged of a family had become sick, apparently beyond the hope of recovery, to bury him. He was wrapped up in his rude blankets, and taken to the

place appointed, usually at some distance from his dwelling. Here the earth would be cleared of rubbish, and excavated one or two feet, according to the depth of the soil. The sick man was then stretched upon his earthy bed. Beside him was placed his favorite hunting weapons, or whatever article he was, while in health, in the habit of using, together with an empty cup, which they supposed he would need in the long pilgrimage before him. A rude arch of stone was then erected over him, carefully laid up so as not to press upon his body, and the whole was covered with a thin coat of earth. Nothing would exasperate them more than to tear open one of these burial places, or rob its inmates of the weapons which were deposited with their remains. Should any one of the tribe be detected in such a sacrilege, he would be punished with death, and his whole family shunned, as accursed of the whole race.

Respecting the vegetable productions of Labrador, I can give merely the results of my limited observation. I cannot dwell upon their variety, beauty, or quality, for the whole may be comprised in a meagre list of shrubs and trees of a dwarfish size, and a kind of

moss, and lichen, before mentioned, together with here and there a running vine resembling the ivy of New-England. The largest in growth are the spruce, and fir, and white birch, which are found in the valleys among the mountains. I noticed a number which were of scores of years standing, yet their trunks had not grown above four feet from the earth. The body of the tree was from four to twelve inches in diameter, and the top a perfect knot of twigs growing together so as to form a web almost impenetrable to the snow or rain. The tops of some of these firs branch out so as to form a comfortable shelter beneath, for the hunter when overtaken by a storm, or for wild animals during the winter. These trees are used for fuel, and are cut up root and branch—they burn rapidly, being full of a resinous substance, much harder than the pitch of our common pines. There is another kind of dwarf shrubbery, growing together, and almost impenetrable, without the use of the hatchet—generally about two feet high. This is also used for fuel in the summer season. The larger trees are found ten or twelve miles in the interior, whence they are drawn on

sledges upon the snow and ice by teams of the Esquimaux dogs.

A species of long coarse grass, the wild parsnip, and a variety of other vegetables are found in the deep valleys, where they are sheltered from the northern blasts, and nourished by the sun's rays. Another species of grass adapted for the support of the feathered tribes, is abundant on the marshes and banks of the lakes and rivers. An herb called Wee-suck-a-pucka, grows in most parts of the country, of which the leaves, and especially the flowers, make a very agreeable kind of tea, much used by the Indians and Europeans, not only for its pleasant flavor, but its salutary effects. It has a slight aromatic taste, is considered serviceable in rheumatism, for strengthening the stomach, and promoting perspiration. Another herb, named by the natives jack-ashey-puck, resembling the creeping box-wood, is used with tobacco, making it milder and pleasanter in smoking. Several small shrubs are found in the country which bear fruit, the principal of which is called the baked apple berry, so named by the fishermen from its kindred taste to the common baked apple of the states. In com-

mon seasons, it blossoms about the first of July, and is ripe by the latter days of August ; the fruit is of a pale yellow color, soft and juicy. On the 28th of August, I accompanied the captain of our schooner, and several others to a large field of this wild fruit in the neighborhood of Red bay, where we had a good feast of this very agreeable substitute for the genuine baked apple. The white inhabitants of Labrador have attempted to cultivate some of the European plants, but succeed in raising only some varieties of turnips and cabbage, on patches of ground manured by the offals of the fishery, and these productions are esteemed as great delicacies.

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## CHAPTER VI.

White inhabitants of Labrador; their character and pursuits.—Tenure of property.—Animals and birds of the peninsula.—Eggs on Mecatina isles.—Disputes of the Nova-Scotia and Yankee fishermen.—Manner of taking seals; and extent of the fishery.—Mode of constructing habitations.—Character and occupation of females.—Prevalence of intemperance.—Sagacity and value of the Esquimaux dog.

As on the shores of Newfoundland, so upon the coast of Labrador, the Europeans have established settlements at every point favorable to the great pursuits of fishing and hunting. These settlers, so far as I had opportunities of forming an estimate of their character, are in general inferior to those of Newfoundland, in capacity, information, and morals. The reader will see at once that I am not placing them very high in the scale of civilization. There are none among them who can read, or write, save the few traders on the coast, and these are in general sadly deficient in mercantile knowledge and honor. The shore inhabitants, in some instances, amass a small property, by fortunately obtaining possession of some good sealing post, or



fishing stand, and by superior improvements in the accommodations of their cabins, or little patches of cultivated ground. The tenure of soil here is that of the squatters—he who pitches upon a tract, holds it by virtue of possession, and no subsequent interference disturbs his right thus acquired. There being land enough, and all of nearly equal quality, there is little difficulty as to boundaries, and he who wishes to claim a thousand acres as his own, can be as easily gratified as the more humble individual who is content with half a score.

A good sealing post is ranked as of the most valuable species of property, and is transmitted from one family to another; and sold, sometimes for a round price. Trespass upon one of these posts, would be severely punished. The more common mode of sealing of late years, however, is to fit out vessels, and search for these amphibia in the straits and along the Gulf.

The great employment of these people during the summer months is the seal, whale, cod, and salmon fishery, which they most assiduously pursue. Indeed their principal means of subsistence are derived from these

pursuits. Nature has so determined the instinct of these various tribes, that they appear in regular succession, and consequently the pursuit of one does not necessarily interfere with that of another. Immediately after the ice begins to break up in the spring, the shore inhabitants prepare themselves for the pursuit of the seal, usually the most arduous as well as profitable of their annual employments. This lasts about four or five weeks. After this commences the best season for the cod-fishery. The salmon and trout catching next engages attention, and of these there are myriads in all the streams and brooks of Labrador. The females are expert in this business, and as soon as the proper time arrives, they are as actively engaged as the males with their hooks and nets. The dog fish is a species taken in large quantities in the latter part of the season, principally for their oil, although the flesh is used in the winter as food for their dogs. The flesh of the seal is also preserved for similar purposes. The skin of the dog fish is rough, and when stretched and dried is used as a substitute for sand paper. Some of the finer descriptions are used for the purpose of

polishing metal substances, and sharpening edge tools. Portions of the skin of this fish are selected which even give a fine edge to the razor.

It is not necessary to go into any labored description of the animals that are found in the interior of Labrador. They are neither very numerous nor various. Reindeer, whose venison is excellent, are tolerably abundant. Black and white bears are sometimes seen in considerable numbers, especially where the fish, being retarded in their progress by the cataracts, are found collected in one place. Wolves, foxes, mountain cats, martins, beavers, otters, hares, a few ermines, and a plenty of porcupines, are the principal quadrupeds met with in this dreary region. The seal is an animal too well known to all readers of natural history to need description here. The arctic species are distinguished by their great numbers, and the various or rather universal purposes to which they are applied by the natives. They furnish the inhabitant with food for his table, oil for his lamp, clothing for his person; even their bones and skins supply materials for his light portable boats and his summer tents.

The more permanent feathered inhabitants

of Labrador are eagles, hawks, horned owls, and the partridge. Many migratory birds frequent the woods and lakes during the summer and autumn, some of which are remarkable for their beautiful plumage; but, as soon as the breeding season is past, they seek a happier climate before the approach of winter. The curlews are extremely abundant, and when well grown, are excellent food. They appear on the coast in the beginning of autumn in vast flocks, when great numbers are taken by the sportsmen.

On the Mecatina isles, situate in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and near the Labrador coast, immense flocks of sea-fowl throng, during the warm season, to deposit their eggs. The fishermen not unfrequently gather these eggs by hogsheads, and they have become an article of traffic. The fishermen from Nova Scotia have long claimed these birds nests as their own, and until Yankee enterprise cut in for a share, they enjoyed the whole of the plunder. Disputes often arise between the Yankee and Nova Scotia fishermen as to the possession of these treasures, and on one occasion the dispute rose so high, that the "blue noses," as the Nova Scotians are call-

led by Yankee fishermen, fortified themselves with "king's arguments," fire arms, determined to prevent the Yankees from carrying off the eggs. But Yankee cunning is sometimes a match for any argument. They knew that these egg islands were usually covered in a dense fog in the morning. They accordingly waited off shore in their vessels, until the "blue noses" had gathered together large quantities of eggs upon the shore, ready for packing, and dismissed their hands for the night, as was their custom, intending on the following day to pack their eggs in casks already provided, and take them aboard their vessels. When the morning came, and the fogs had begun to clear up, the "blue noses" found the Yankees had been there before them, and packed and carried off all their eggs. The affair gave rise to some belligerent operations, but finally resulted in an agreement of the parties not to deny to each other a reciprocity in the matter of eggs. And thus this storm blew over, without involving two great countries in war.

I have spoken of the seal fishery as one of the great employments of these people of the north. They are taken for the sake of

their skins and the oil their fat yields. They are said to be capable of being tamed, and to be very fond of music. It is remarked of them, that instead of being terrified at thunder and lightning, they are rather delighted, generally come on shore in tempests and storms, and even quit their icy abodes to avoid the shock of the tempestuous waves. At such times they sport in great numbers along the shore—the elemental conflict seems to divert them, and the heavy rains that fall seem to enliven them. The Icelanders have a curious tradition respecting the seals. They believe them to be the offspring of Pharaoh and his host, who were converted into seals on their being overwhelmed in the Red Sea. Were the race of this creature to cease to exist, the Greenlander would be rendered almost unable to inhabit his rigid clime, as it is particularly from them that he derives the necessities of life.

The manner in which the seal is taken is usually as follows. When the hunter perceives one, he passes the word along in low tones to his nearest companion, who telegraphs the signal, till all in the boats are engaged in the chase ; and it is seldom possible

for their prey to escape. The seal is impetuous in disposition, and having once discovered his pursuers, he dives repeatedly, and in different directions, to confound them; but becomes at length so short breathed by his hurry, that he cannot remain long out of sight—and as the pursuers are around at various points, watching the favorable moment, one of them paddles along silently in his rear, using the paddle with one hand, while with the other he is getting his tackle in order. Advancing near enough, for he is sure to measure his distance with accuracy, he flings the dart, and scarcely ever fails to strike. The seal, terrified and wounded, dives in the greatest terror; but a float being attached to the dart by a leathern line, he is soon forced up again, and despatched.

Another mode of killing the seal is to go to the caves on shore, into which hordes of seals occasionally enter. When the sealers are properly stationed, they raise a simultaneous shout, at which the affrighted animals rush out in great confusion, and are despatched with wonderful quickness by a single blow on the nose struck with a club. They are very tenacious of life, when struck or woun-



ded on any other part of the body.—The best season for sealing is said to be in the months of March and April. When the boats arrive at the ice, the sealers immediately attack the animals with clubs, and stun them by a single blow over the nose, which mode sometimes enables a single person to destroy a great number. When they are seen on pieces of floating ice, they are hunted by means of boats, each boat pursuing a different herd. Should the seals attempt to leave the ice before the arrival of the boat, the sealers shout as loudly as possible, and produce such amazement in the seals by this uproar as to delay their flight until the boat arrives, and the work of destruction is begun. Where the seals are very numerous, the sealers stop not to flay those they have killed, but set off to another ice field to kill more, merely leaving one man behind to take off the skins and fat. When the condition of the ice forbids the use of boats, the hunter is obliged to pursue the seals over it, jumping from piece to piece, until he succeeds in taking one. This is sometimes a horrible business, since many of the seals are merely stunned, and occasionally recover after they have



been actually flayed. In this condition, too shockingly mangled for description, they have been seen to make battle, and even to swim off.

The number of seals destroyed in an ordinary season, by the regular sealers, is immense. A single ship will sometimes obtain three or four thousand skins, and a hundred tons of oil. Whale ships have accidentally fallen in with and secured two or three thousand of these animals in the month of April. The sealing business, however, is extremely hazardous; and many ships with all their crews have been lost by the sudden and tremendous storms occurring in the arctic seas, where the dangers are vastly multiplied by the driving of immense bodies of ice. In one storm that occurred in the year 1774, no less than five seal ships were destroyed in a few hours, and six hundred seamen perished.

As soon as the first snows appear in autumn, the inhabitants of Labrador are accustomed to leave their fishing grounds, and repair to the forests of the interior, in search of game. They are expert sportsmen and trappers, and scarcely ever fail of success, unless when overtaken by one of those sud-

den, and often violent snow-storms which render the pursuits of the hunter perilous in the extreme.

The vice of intemperance prevails every where among the European settlers of Labrador. Scarcely a family can be found among them who do not habitually use intoxicating liquors. Men, women and children alike fall under the curse. It is a prolific source of diseases to the inhabitants, and more or less are cut off every season in the prime of life from its fatal influences. And beside the numbers thus destroyed, there are many instances of fishermen lost through intoxication, by being unable to manage their craft, or tumbling overboard in drunken stupor. The following fact was related to me by an inhabitant of Newfoundland, in speaking of the gross intemperance of the shore inhabitants of Labrador. As he was coasting one day up the Gulf, during a rough sea and high wind, he discovered at a considerable distance ahead an object that appeared to be floating without helm or guidance upon the waves. He hove to, in order to ascertain its nature, and soon perceived that it was a large boat, having a man, woman and three children on

board. The man, who was afterwards found to be the father of the children, was dead drunk, and the mother so far gone under the influence of liquor that she had no more apparent regard for her children than for the fish in the depths of the ocean. The eldest of the children was twelve years of age, and the evil practices of the parents had been followed by their unhappy offspring, who were evidently unconscious of any danger. The captain of the Newfoundland fishermen kindly took them on board, and when they had roused from their stupor, informed them of the peril to which their intemperance had exposed them, and admonished them to beware for the future. But for his timely succor, they would inevitably have perished. It appeared on inquiry that the party had that morning been out in their boat to purchase a few articles in a neighboring harbor, and that there the trader had plied them well with rum, and fitted them out with their articles in the midst of a gale, heedless whether they perished or not.

The inhabitants along the shore usually have two dwellings, one for the summer season, and another for the winter ; the former

is usually situated on some open and elevated spot, where a free circulation of the air can be had, and the latter is built generally beneath some shelving rock or precipice, or high hill, exposed as much as possible to the south, and sheltered as far as practicable from the wintry blasts of the north. Most of these are immediately along the shore, and near the water's edge—such situations being less exposed to the violent storms of the arctic winters. The body of the habitation is constructed of spruce poles placed in the ground about two feet asunder, leaving them about four or five feet in height. These poles are then thatched, or interwoven, basket-fashion, with spruce twigs and saplings, so compactly as almost to exclude the rain and air. Rafters are then extended from each of these body posts or poles, and meeting at the top, form a conical roof, which is thatched in a similar manner, and is then covered with peat moss, which renders the roof perfectly tight and warm. A small aperture is left in the top, for the smoke to escape—all the rest of the building is made close and tight. Within, the turf and gravel is scraped off, leaving the rocky floor entirely bare and gen-

erally smooth. This is usually sprinkled with a white sand from the sea shore, and the interior thus presents an air of neatness, while the warm fire kept up within renders the cabin comfortable even in the coldest weather of this inhospitable climate.

Were the females of Labrador accustomed to no other labor than the mere cooking of food for their families, they would have a large portion of their time to spend in idle employments. But they engage in the hard and laborious toils of fishing with as much zeal and activity as the males. When the salmon and trout fishing commences, the women and children employ themselves assiduously in the sport, and are often out night and day while the season of this fishery lasts. At the fish stands, while the cod fishery is in the full tide of operation, the women are seen among the most constant and dextrous in dressing the fish, thrown up by the fishermen. Some of these females will dress two or three thousand fish in a single day. In their general appearance, form, and features, the females of Labrador are inferior to those of New-Foundland—and utterly ignorant as they are of every thing beyond the narrow circle of their hum-

ble employments, the standard of morals is exceedingly low. Intemperance is a vice almost as common among the females as males, and where such is the case, no very high value is placed upon the virtues of chastity or morality. The young women are very fond of ornaments, and ingenious in the manufacture of work cases and other trinkets from the skins of birds of bright and beautiful plumage. I saw several of these ingenious specimens, and the young ladies who wrought them seemed to be proud of their efforts, and were highly pleased with the compliments we bestowed upon their ingenuity.

One mode of travelling during winter prevails throughout this country, both amongst the white population and the Esquimaux Indians. Every family keeps a kennel of dogs. This animal, much valued the world over, is the most important quadruped of the arctic regions, and the most valuable possession of its people, who have succeeded in taming and rendering it equally valuable for draught and for hunting. He assists them to hunt the bear, the rein-deer, and the seal. In winter he is yoked to a sledge, and conveys his master over the trackless snow, or hauls home

the fuel that is to feed the fires of his cabin. The Esquimaux dog does not bark. His ears are short and erect, and his bushy tail curves over his back. His average stature is one foot ten inches, and the length of his body, from the back of the head to the commencement of the tail, is two feet three inches. His coat is long and furry, and is sometimes brindled, sometimes of a dingy red, black and white, or wholly black. Some naturalists consider this race of dogs as descended from the wolf and fox.

The manner in which these animals draw the sledge, is as follows. The dogs have a simple harness of deer or seal skin, going round the neck by one bight, and another for each of the fore legs, with a single thong leading over the back, and attached to the sledge as a trace. Though they appear at first sight to be huddled together without regard to regularity, there is in fact considerable attention paid to their arrangement, particularly in the selection of a dog of peculiar spirit and sagacity, who is allowed by a longer trace, to precede the rest as leader, and to whom, in turning to the left or right, the driver usually addresses himself. This choice is made with-



out regard to age or sex, and the rest of the dogs take precedence, according to their training or sagacity, the least effective being put nearest the sledge. The leader is usually from eighteen to twenty feet from the fore part of the sledge, and the hindmost dog about half that distance; so that when ten or twelve are running together, several are nearly abreast of each other. The driver sits quite low, on the fore part of the sledge, with his feet overhanging the snow on one side, and having in his hand a whip, of which the handle is plaited a little way down to stiffen it, and give it a spring, on which much of its use depends; and that which composes the lash is chewed by the women, to make it flexible in frosty weather. The men acquire from their youth considerable expertness in the use of this whip, the lash of which is left to trail along the ground by the side of the sledge, and with which they can inflict a very severe blow on any dog at pleasure. Though the dogs are kept in training entirely by fear of the whip, and indeed, without it, would soon have their own way, its immediate effect is always detrimental to the draught of the sledge; for not only does the individual that is

struck draw back, and slacken his trace, but generally turns upon his next neighbor, and this passing on to the next, occasions a general divergency, accompanied by the usual yelping and showing of the teeth. The dogs then come together again by degrees, and the draught of the sledge is accelerated; but even at the best of times, by this rude mode of draught, the traces of one third of the dogs form an angle of thirty or forty degrees on each side of the direction in which the sledge is advancing. Another great inconvenience attending this mode of putting the dogs to, beside that of not employing their strength to the best advantage, is the constant entanglement of the traces, by the dogs repeatedly doubling under from side to side, to avoid the whip; so that after running a few miles, the traces always require to be taken off and cleared.

With heavy loads, the dogs draw best with one of their own people, especially a woman, walking a little way ahead; and in this case they are sometimes enticed to mend their pace by holding a mitten to the mouth, and then making the motion of cutting it with a knife and throwing it on the snow,

when the dogs, mistaking it for meat, hasten forward to pick it up. The women also entice them from the huts in a similar manner. The rate at which they travel depends of course upon the weight they have to draw, and the road on which their journey is performed. When the latter is level, and very hard and smooth, constituting what in other parts of the world is called good sleighing, six or seven dogs will draw from eight to ten hundred weight, at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour, for several hours together; and will easily, under these circumstances, perform a journey of fifty or sixty miles a day. On untrodden snow, five and twenty or thirty miles would be a good day's journey. The same number of well fed dogs, with a weight of five or six hundred that of the sledge included, are almost unmanageable, and will on a smooth road, sometimes run any way they please, at the rate of ten miles an hour. Their steady employment, however, gradually accustoms these animals to the harness, and they become docile, obedient, and beyond all other animals in such a climate as that of Labrador, useful to the inhabitants.

## CHAPTER VII.

Health of Labrador.—Account of the natives.—Northern Indians ; their manners and customs ; their doctors or conjurors ; neglect of the sick and the dead ; singular traditions.—Description of the dress, manners and customs of the Esquimaux Indians ; their habitations ; general improvidence ; superstitious belief, and universal ignorance.

The inhabitants of Labrador possess one great blessing, of which regions more highly favored in all other respects, are often deprived. A general and almost universal health naturally pervades the settlements. Were it not for the prevalent vice of intemperance, few, comparatively speaking, of this hardy race would be cut off in youth or manhood, but might probably live to a good old age. Many instances were pointed out to me of great longevity, and I frequently urged upon those young men whom I casually met on the shores, the importance of temperance to health and long life, and happiness here and hereafter ; but was usually met with some rude jest in reply, or flat denial of the bad effects of intoxicating liquors. It will be a long time before this destroying and consum-

ing evil will be eradicated from among the inhabitants of Labrador.

Having more than once alluded to the natives of this country, it may be proper that I should give some particulars concerning their habits, manners and customs. Beside the Esquimaux, who are generally a diminutive race, and of peaceful habits, there is another tribe who inhabit the more northerly portions of the continent, and are often at war with the Esquimaux. They are called the mountaineers, or northern Indians.

The northern Indians are rather above the middle stature, and well proportioned. Their foreheads are low, eyes small, noses aquiline, high cheek bones, their cheeks fleshy, and chins long and broad. Their complexion is of brown, inclining to a dingy copper color. They subsist chiefly on venison, and generally spend the whole summer in hunting the deer, or catching fish in the rivers or lakes. As they have no dogs like the Esquimaux, and seldom any powder and ball, they make use of their bows and arrows in killing the deer while passing through the narrow defiles of the mountains. The women and children not unfrequently unite with them in

their hunting expeditions. In fishing, which is a favorite employment, they use hooks and nets at all seasons of the year. Their nets are made of thongs cut from raw deer skins, and are furnished with various appendages, such as the bills and feet of birds, the toes and jaws of otters, &c. which are esteemed essential to their success. These nets are always used separately, and at a great distance from each other, and on no account would they unite for the purpose of stretching across the channel of a narrow river, because they say one net would become jealous of another, and would not catch a single fish. In fishing with baits, they are equally superstitious, and all the baits which they use are compositions of charms, enclosed within a piece of fish skin, so as to resemble a small fish. These charms are bits of beaver's tails, otter's teeth, muskrat's entrails, curdled milk, human hair, &c. ; and almost every lake and river is supposed to require a peculiar combination of different articles. They often eat their food in a raw state, and frequently from choice, especially in the case of fish, which they seldom dress so far as to warm it thoroughly. They often pull out the kidneys of

newly slaughtered deer or buffalo, and eat them warm without dressing. They drink the blood as it flows from the wound in the carcase, and account it a most nourishing description of food.

The clothing of these Indians consists chiefly of the skins of deer, with the hair inwards ; but for summer months, they use a fine soft leather, prepared from the skins of these animals. The women of this tribe are more the slaves than companions of the men. They possess little beauty even in youth, and become old and wrinkled before they reach the age of thirty. But they are generally chaste, mild and obliging creatures, making even in their degraded condition, the most faithful servants, affectionate wives, and indulgent mothers. Among these Indians a plurality of wives is common. Every man takes as many as he is able to maintain : and there are often six or eight in one family. These are changed, or increased in number, at the pleasure of the husband. No ceremonies attend their marriages or divorces. When the husband suspects any one of his wives of incontinency, or is not pleased with her accomplishments, he gives her a sound



beating and turns her out of doors, telling her to go to her lover, or relations, as the case may be. It is also a daily occurrence among them to take by force the wives of others whom they may happen to fancy ; and all that is necessary to decide the claim, is to vanquish the former husband in wrestling. On these occasions, the by-standers never attempt to interfere ; nor will one brother even offer to assist another, except by giving his advice aloud, which being equally heard, may be equally followed by both the parties engaged. When one of them falls, or yields, the other is entitled to carry off the woman, who was the cause of the contention. It is a common custom among them to exchange wives for a time, as one of the strongest ties of friendship between two families ; and in case of the death of either husband, the other considers himself bound to support the children of the deceased.

Their doctors are a class of conjurers, who impose upon the credulity of their patients ; while they really seem to believe in the efficacy of their own operations. These conjurers profess to accomplish their cures by the aid of certain spirits or fairies, with whom

they pretend to converse, and whom they often describe as appearing to them under the shapes of beasts, birds, clouds, &c. They are supposed to be equally able, by means of these supernatural allies, to take away as well as to prolong any one's life ; and when they choose to threaten such a malign influence, to any individual, or family, the imaginations of their victims are so possessed by the conviction of their power, that the consequence is affirmed to have often proved fatal. Indeed, when any of their principal people die, their death, in whatever way it has taken place, is usually ascribed to some conjuring influence, either of their own countrymen, or of the Esquimaux.

They never bury their dead, but leave the bodies on the spot where they expire. They are understood to be generally devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey ; and probably for this reason, the natives will never eat the flesh of foxes, wolves, ravens, &c. unless pressed by necessity. The greatest calamity that can befall one of these Indians, is old age or helplessness. When any one is incapable to labor, he is treated with the greatest neglect, and when he becomes too feeble to move

from place to place, is abandoned to perish of want. This custom is so general that it is said one half of the aged people of both sexes die in this miserable manner.

The notions which these Indians entertain in religion are so extremely vague and limited, that they may almost be said to have no ideas at all on that subject. With regard to the origin of the world, they have a tradition, that the first person on earth was a woman, who, after wandering sometime alone, found an animal like a dog, which followed her to the cave where she lived, and transforming itself in the night time into the shape of a handsome youth, rendered her the mother of a family. Some time afterwards, a person of such gigantic stature as to reach the clouds with his head, came to level the land, which had been hitherto a confused heap, and this he effected merely with the help of his walking stick, marking out, at the same time, the lakes, ponds and rivers. He then took the dog, and tearing it in pieces, threw its intestines into the waters, commanding them to become fishes ; dispersed its flesh over the land, with a similar charge to form the different kinds of beasts ; threw pieces of its

skin in the air, to give origin to the feathered tribes ; commanded the woman and her offspring to kill, eat, and never spare, as he had charged these creatures to multiply for her use ; and then returning to the place whence he came, has never been heard of since. They believe in the existence of several kinds of spirits, whom they suppose to inhabit the different elements, and to whose influence they attribute every change in their lot, whether favorable or adverse. They have no fixed creed, however, in these matters ; but are continually receiving new fables from their conjurers, who profess to receive intimations in dreams from these invisible beings. They have no practical religious observances whatever, except perhaps the speaking with reverence of certain beasts and birds, in which they suppose these spirits reside.

These Indians are not a warlike people, and notwithstanding their total want of humanity towards their aged and suffering relatives, they are scarcely ever known to engage in any deadly quarrels amongst themselves, and are not inclined to acts of cruelty except towards the Esquimaux, whom they seem to regard as a common enemy.

The Esquimaux Indians of Labrador, resemble the Lapps and Samoides of Europe, as well as the Greenlanders. It is not only in Labrador that this race is found, but they are thinly scattered along the coast, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the shores of the Arctic Sea, and thence westward to Behring's Strait. These people are distinguished from the American Indians, by their sallow complexions, thick bushy beards, low stature and feeble constitution. Their name is said to imply *eaters of raw flesh*. They have flat countenances, short noses, black coarse hair, and remarkably small hands and feet. They differ from the more inland natives, in having beards, whereas those other tribes have no hair on any part of their bodies except the head. They are very dextrous in hunting and fishing, particularly in catching and killing seals, which are of the utmost importance to them: the flesh supplies them with food; the fat furnishes oil for lamp light and kitchen fire, and is also used as sauce for their fish. The oil is also bartered with the factors for all kinds of necessaries. With the fibres and sinews of the seal, they can sew better than with thread or silk. Of the en-

trails they make their windows, shirts, and the bladders which they use with their harpoons. Even the blood, boiled with other ingredients, is eaten as soup. Formerly, for want of iron, the bones of the seal were manufactured into all kinds of instruments and working tools ; and the skin is still used for clothing, and for covering their boats and tents, as well as for many other purposes.

The clothing of the Esquimaux is composed of the skins of rein-deer, seal, and some kinds of birds, sewed together with the sinews of the rein-deer, seal or whale, split so thin as to be adapted to the finest steel needles ; and with these they execute their work with great neatness and ingenuity. The under garment, or shirt, is made of the skins of fowls, with the feathers inwards, or sometimes of the skin of the rein-deer. Over this shirt, the more wealthy among them wear another garment of fine haired deer skin ; but as this article is now extremely scarce, the common people substitute seal skins, with the rough side outwards, the borders and seams being ornamented with narrow strips of red leather and white dog-skin. Seal-skins are likewise manufactured into

drawers, stockings and shoes ; generally rather clumsily made, but answering the purpose of protecting the feet from the cold. The outer garment usually reaches about half-way down the thigh, and is sewed round like a wagoner's frock, though neither so long nor so loose. On the top of this is fastened a cap, or hood, to be drawn over the head as a defence against wet and cold. When they travel by sea, a great coat, made of a black smooth seal's hide, rendered water-proof, covers the rest of the dress.

The only difference of the women's dress from that of the men, is that the jacket of the former has high shoulders and a hood still higher : it is not cut round at the bottom, but forms, before and behind, a long flap, the pointed extremity of which reaches a little below the knee. The boots and shoes of the women are of dressed skins, with the seams neatly sewed and figured. Mothers and nurses put on a garment wide enough in the back to hold a child, which is sometimes placed therein quite naked, and kept from dropping through by means of a girdle fastened about the woman's waist. This is the only kind of swaddling clothes, or cradle,



with which the infant Esquimaux is accommodated. Some of these people contrive to keep their garments neat and clean—but generally their ordinary dress abounds in filth and vermin, and exhales an odor so noxious, that an European is always glad to keep to the windward of them.

They are in general a timorous people, and strike their breasts, in token of peace, when they approach strangers. Their dwellings in winter resemble caves, or holes, dug in the earth; and though generally comprising but one apartment, it is not unfrequently occupied by several relatives, with their wives and children. In summer, they frequently shift their abodes; and then live under tents, made of skins stretched upon poles stuck in the earth, and drawn at top into a conical shape. They keep a great number of dogs, which guard their habitations, and draw their sledges. Occasionally their dogs are used for food, and their skins converted into clothing. But the greatest luxury of an Esquimaux is seal blubber, which he devours with avidity, and to excess.

They all practice polygamy, but their families are not generally numerous. The wives

live together very harmoniously, are continually at work, and sew very neatly with the sinews of the deer. They indeed have all the labor to perform, except procuring food. The husbands are strangers to jealousy, although they have frequent occasion to doubt the continency of their wives. They have no government, or laws ; and no other punishment for the most detestable crimes than general censure. No man is held superior to another, except in as far as he excels in strength or courage, or in the number of his family. They are in general a harmless people, not apt<sup>r</sup> to steal from one another, or to give way to violent anger : but they are sufficiently harsh to the poor women when they happen to give offence.

The Esquimaux, whom Capt. Parry found about the Melville Peninsula, to the north of Hudson's Bay, dwelt in dome shaped huts built of frozen snow, the approach to which was through low passages of the same material. Thus snow, the chief product of the northern tempests, becomes to these people their protection against its own cold. This frozen material is formed into curved slabs of about two feet long and half a foot thick, put

together so neatly as to present a species of dome, rising six or eight feet from the ground, and fourteen or sixteen feet in diameter. Their mode of inserting the key slab, which binds the whole together, would be satisfactory to the eye of the regularly-bred artist. A plate of ice is placed in the roof as a window, which admits the light as through ground glass. In each room of the habitation, suspended from the roof, burns a lamp, with a long wick formed of a peculiar species of moss, fed with the oil of the seal or the walrus, and serving at once for light, heat and cookery. The family sit round the apartment, on a bench formed of snow, strewed with slender twigs and covered with skins ; but this part of the dwelling must be carefully kept a good deal below the freezing point, since a higher temperature would speedily dissolve the walls of the frail tenement.

These Indians show very little prudence in the management of their supplies. The instant that tidings transpire of the capture of a walrus, or other favorite delicacy, shouts of exultation are raised through the village, as the inhabitants all share the prize in common. On its arrival, slices are instantly cut out, ev-

ery lamp is supplied with oil, the houses are in a blaze ; all the pots are filled with flesh, and the women, while cooking, fish out and devour the daintiest morsels. The feast prepared, one man takes up a large piece, applies it to his mouth, and severs with his teeth as much as that cavity can possibly admit ; then hands it to his neighbor, and he to the next, till all is consumed. A new piece is then supplied, and thus the process continues, almost without intermission, till the animal is entirely consumed.

Considered as to their intellectual condition, the Esquimaux have not the least tincture of what goes by the name of learning ; can form no abstract ideas ; and none of them can count above ten, the number of their fingers. Yet we have noticed their skill in the construction of their habitations, as well as in the pursuit and destruction of the various tenants of the earth and water, on which their subsistence depends.

The religious ideas of the Esquimaux, though they cannot be dignified with any better name than superstition, are not much more absurd than the popular creed of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Their princi-

pal deity is represented as a female, immensely tall, with only the left eye, wearing a pig-tail reaching down to the knee, and so thick that it can scarcely be grasped with both hands. This divinity has for her father a giant having one arm. They also believe in a tutelary spirit, frequently invoked, and in a huge bear, whose dwelling is in the middle of the polar ice, and who frequently holds converse with mankind. The natives also believe in a future world, the employments and pleasures of which, according to the usual creed of all savage races, are all sensual. The soul, they say, descends beneath the earth through successive abodes, the first of which has somewhat the nature of purgatory; but such spirits as are good, easily find their way through it, and arrive at other mansions more delightful, until they arrive at that of perfect bliss, far beneath, where the sun never sets, and where, by the side of large lakes that never freeze, the deer roam in vast herds, and the seal and the walrus always abound in the waters.

In Franklin's Account of the Polar Regions, it is mentioned, that a very old man among the Esquimaux Indians, on beholding

for the first time his face in a mirror, started back with the wildest emotions of surprise and horror. This incident, so characteristic of the general intellect of the race, is thus finely illustrated by one of the most gifted of American writers, Mrs. Sigourney :—

Thou nameless wanderer, old and gray,  
Why flees the life blood from thy heart,  
When first that strange, reflected ray,  
Reveals thy features' wrinkled chart?

See'st thou the steps of years gone by,  
Dark years of roaming want and care?  
Their image in thy sunken eye?  
Their snows amid thy scatter'd hair?

Thou see'st, alas, what all must trace,  
Who linger long on time's cold tide,  
The wreck of vigor, health and grace,  
Which youth so fondly hopes to hide.

One glass there is, and one alone,  
Which paints with radiance pure and free,  
Man's victory o'er the latest groan;  
But who shall hold that glass to thee?

Say, who shall bid those eyes, that stream  
To mark thy withering, wasting clay,  
Exult to see its loop-holes beam  
With lustre of eternal day?

To the christian philanthropist, the coast of Labrador presents an interesting field of labor. Here amid our northern seas, and within reach of benevolent enterprise, are

hundreds and thousands of souls, perishing for want of religious and moral culture. Truly the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. While our missionaries are carrying the glad tidings of salvation through the Redeemer, to the farthest India, and the savage isles of the South, I cannot but hope that the attention of New-England christians will be ere long directed to the coast of Labrador and the islands of the North. Thousands of New-England fishermen yearly frequent these shores, where never the sound of the church going bell is heard, and where few of the inhabitants ever witnessed the keeping of a Sabbath. Once while there I had the satisfaction of attending an exercise of reading the scriptures. While we lay in Red bay, an English vessel of war came in, and remained over one sabbath. Glad of the opportunity, I went on board, and attended the usual services of the established or episcopal church. An interesting discourse was read, and I was struck with the perfect order and attention of officers and crew, and could not help contrasting their happy lot with that of the inhabitants of the coast.

But I must hasten to a conclusion.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Preparation for return to Yankee land.—Gale at sea.—Anchorage at Boone Bay.—St. John's islands : natural curiosity, known as "Jacob's Well."—Departure.—Storm.—Arrival at Gabarus bay in Breton island.—Sydney.—Description of the ancient fortress of Louisbourg ; its present desolation.—Departure from the bay.—Arrival at the "home of the Pilgrims."—Conclusion.

The great object of our voyage having been accomplished, at the beginning of September we set about preparations for the homeward passage. Our little vessel was put in trim, and all things snugly stowed away in their appropriate places, when we hoisted sail, on the 6th September, for "home, sweet home!" It may well be supposed that this was a season of rejoicing and merry hearts to most of us ; particularly so to our cabin-boy, whom I had often heard say, with tears in his eyes, "I wish I could see mother!" The little fellow was full of life and animation, seeming almost to realize in anticipation the fond meeting of parent and child, of brothers and sisters, long separated.

The third day after our departure, having had two days of pleasant sailing with slight breezes, a gale sprung up from the northwest, which increased during the day and night. Our vessel was heavy laden, and at times the main deck would be under water. It became necessary at length to disencumber the deck of some of the oil butts, and cut a hole through the side just above the scuppers, in order to free the deck of water. The storm continued until the next day at noon. We lost the jib, carried away by the wind, the fore-mast was sprung, and we had to take in the fore-sail, and double reef the main-sail. The wind was now directly aft, and the shores of Newfoundland beginning to heave in sight, we were in hopes of reaching a harbor before another night closed in upon us. Toward sunset the winds abated, but the sea was rough; however, we succeeded late in the evening in reaching Boone bay, the first harbor we made at Newfoundland on our passage out. We were heartily glad to find good anchorage, and opportunity for repairs.

In calm weather, the fishermen sometimes call at St. Johns' islands on the west coast of Newfoundland. They are composed of

barren rocks, and are sought as places for curing fish. There is, as the captain of our vessel informed me, a remarkable natural curiosity, on one of these rocks, called "Jacob's Well." It is a circular excavation through the rock, from six to eight feet in diameter, and about sixty feet in depth. Its walls are as straight as if cut with an auger, perfectly round, and smooth as if wrought by the hand of an artist. Stooping and placing the ear near the margin of the well, the listener hears sounds which he at first supposes to be of some stringed instrument, varying in tones, and soft as that of the harp. These sounds are produced by drops of water issuing from the sides of the well, and falling into the depths below. Visitors sometimes spend hours in listening to this strange music, and to the loud rumbling cavernous noises, which are produced by throwing handfulls of pebbles into this singular well.

After repairing our little craft, we again put out to sea ; and about sunset on the second day out from our last anchorage, we encountered another gale more tempestuous than the former. But the captain of the Alfred was an experienced seaman, and the

crew attentive to their whole duty on board. The gale continued for two days, during which at times, we had fears of being overwhelmed, and some of the older sailors began to express the belief that our little bark would find a hard bottom in the gulf. But Providence ordered otherwise. We were now driving along the gulf of St. Lawrence, and the winds somewhat abated, we next met with the fogs that hover over these waters. Another source of anxiety now pressed upon our minds. We were nearing St. Paul's island, situated about midway between Cape Gregory of Newfoundland and the north point of Cape Breton. This island has a rocky and precipitous shore, dangerous to approach, and upon which several vessels have been wrecked during storms, or in the midst of the fogs. We watched, however, and kept a steady look out, until the danger was happily past, and we made safe anchorage in the noble bay of Gabarus, about one mile westerly of the ancient city of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton. It seemed somewhat like again entering one's own country, to step upon the shores of Cape Breton. The marks of husbandry, of cultivation, of fertile fields, and

rich pastures were seen as we approached the shores. Flocks and herds were also noticed in the distance, and served to increase the interest we felt in this renowned island dependency of Great Britain.

Cape Breton, from its situation, forming the eastern barrier of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and commanding the access from the Atlantic, from the earliest date was regarded as the key to the Canadas. Any naval power in possession of it, provided as it is with good harbors, will be arbiter of the commerce of Canada, and the coasts bordering the St. Lawrence Gulf. The whole circuit of the island of Cape Breton is 275 miles. The principal harbors are those of Sydney, Louisbourg, St. Anne's, and the Great Bras d'Or. As we sailed along the coast, we noticed the buildings and improvements at Sydney, which is regarded as one of the finest harbors in the British provinces. The surrounding land is a fine agricultural tract, the advantages for carrying on the fishery excellent, its trade is opened to all parts of the globe, by its late admission to the number of free ports; and the materials for prosecuting that trade are to be found abundant, in the prime articles of

coals, fish, timber and agricultural produce. Notwithstanding these natural advantages, the tide of fortune has not yet set towards Sydney, and it appears, like Louisbourg, to be neglected for places that cannot vie with it in natural capabilities. Sydney at present contains seventy or eighty houses, and a population of about five hundred souls. The streets are regularly laid out, the private houses in general well built, the grounds in the vicinity are cultivated with some taste, and the whole, being interspersed with gardens, filled with fruit trees, presents a very pleasing appearance.

The entrance of Louisbourg harbor is pointed out to voyagers arriving from the eastward, by the ruins of the light-house, on the bold rocky wall of the northern shore ; a few minutes after approaching which, the mariner shoots from a fretful sea into a smooth and capacious harbor. On entering, the general view is that of a spacious but not very sheltered port, the latter appearance being occasioned by the depression of the bar on the western side, which does not show above the water, and produces in the beholder a feeling of insecurity from that quarter. The

prospect seen before arriving at the northeast arm of the harbor, may be said to be tame. Here the rugged and perpendicular rocks, proceeding from the north side of the entrance, are succeeded by irregular hills, interspersed with groves of fir trees, and clothed with a few huts on the steep declivities next the harbor, conferring on this retired and sheltered arm a picturesque, but rather gloomy air. The surrounding land is evidently poor, in every part of Louisbourg, and the country seats and gardens of the French colonists, must have been created at great labor and expense. The country rises with a pretty quick ascent towards the interior ; and a mile or two from the water, the quality of the soil improves greatly, affording timber and vegetation altogether different from the productions of the shores.

Upon a neck of land on the south side of the harbor, stood the ancient fortress and town of Louisbourg. It was environed, two miles and a half in circumference, with a rampart of stone from thirty to thirty-six feet high, and a ditch eighty feet wide, with the exception of a space of two hundred yards near the sea, which was enclosed by a dyke and a



line of pickets. The water in this place was shallow, and numerous reefs rendered it inaccessible to shipping, while it received an additional protection from the side fire of the bastions. There were six bastions and eight batteries, containing embrasures for one hundred and forty-eight cannon. On an island, at the entrance of the harbor, was planted a battery of thirty cannon ; and at the bottom of the harbor, was the grand or royal battery of twenty-eight forty-two pounders. On a high cliff opposite to the island battery, stood the light-house ; and within this point, at the northeast part of the harbor, was a careening wharf, secure from all winds, and a magazine of naval stores.

The town was regularly laid out in squares. The streets were broad, the houses mostly of wood, but some of stone. On the west side, near the rampart, was a spacious citadel, and a large parade, on one side of which were the governor's apartments. Under the ramparts were casements to receive the women and children during a siege. The entrance of the town on the land side was at the west gate, over a draw bridge, near which was a circular battery, mounting sixteen

guns. The works had been twenty-five years in building, at the time of their reduction by the English in 1745, and cost the crown of France not less than thirty millions of livres. The place was considered so strong as to have obtained the name of the Dunkirk of America.

The historian of New-Hampshire, Dr. Belknap, has given a very interesting account of the capture of this place by the troops under Sir William Pepperell and Com. Warren in 1745. The English however surrendered it to the French, under the treaty of peace in 1749 ; but again took it in 1758, when the fortifications were dismantled, and this large town, then numbering over four thousand inhabitants, has since become almost a scene of desolation.

The ancient walls display even yet the most attractive object to the eye. The contour of these ruined mounds is boldly marked against the sky on the left, as the stranger proceeds into port, there being no higher land in that direction, and prompts inquiry, and induces a visit to the spot where Louisbourg once existed. The site of the town is formed by the harbor and the ocean. Both in the harbor and on the sea side, the land is nearly

even with the water, and gently rises to the eminence around by the now ruined bastions stretching from shore to shore, and thus cutting off the site of Louisbourg from the adjacent country. Immediately in the rear extends a wide spreading bog, intersected by natural ditches, in the summer season over-spread with yellow aquatic lilies. The town being thus situated, the few straggling dwellings of the fishermen now resident there, backed by the range of mounds, are the first objects perceived by a voyager from the westward, even before entering the harbor.

Arriving on the area of the French city, it is found to be every where spread with a mantle of turf, and without the assistance of a native, it is not easy to discover the foundations even of the public buildings. Two or three casements yet invite inspection, appearing like the mouth of huge ovens, surmounted by great masses of earth and sod. These caverns, originally the safe-guards of powder and other combustible munitions of war, now serve to shelter the flocks of sheep that feed upon the ruins. The floors are rendered nearly impassable, by the ordure of these animals, but the vaulted ceilings are adorned by

dependent stalactites, like icicles in shape, but not in purity of color or of substance, being of a material somewhat resembling oyster shells. The mass of stone and brick that composed the buildings of Louisbourg, and which is now swept so completely from its site, has been carried away to build up other places.

The remains of the different batteries on the island and round the harbor, are still shown by the inhabitants, as well as of the wharves, stockade, and sunken ships of war. On gaining the walls above the town, they are found to consist of a range of earthen fortifications, with projecting angles, and extending as already mentioned from the harbor to the sea, interrupted at intervals by large pits, said to have been produced by the efforts of the captors to blow up the walls. From these heights the glacis slopes away to the edge of the bog outside, forming a beautiful level walk, though now only enjoyed by the sheep, being, like the walls, carpeted by short turf.

The prospect from the brow of the dilapidated ramparts, is one of the most impressive that the place affords. Looking to the south-

east, over the former city, the eye wanders upon the interminable ocean, its blue rolling waves occupying three fourths of the scene, and beyond them, on the verge of the horizon, a dense bank of fog sweeps along with the prevailing wind, precluding all hope of discerning any vista beyond that curtain. Turning landwards, towards the southwest, over the spacious bog that lies at the foot of the walls, the sight is met by a range of low wood in the direction of Gabarus, and can penetrate no farther. The harbor is the only prospect to the northward, and immediately in its rear the land rises so as to prevent any more distant view, and even the harbor appears dwindled to a miniature of itself, being seen in the same picture with the mighty ocean that nearly surrounds the beholder. The character of the whole scene is melancholy, presenting the memorials of former life and population, contrasted with its present apparent isolation from the nations of the earth. The impression is not weakened by the sight of the few miserable huts scattered along the shores of the port, and the little fishing vessels, scarcely perceptible in the mountain swell of the ocean. They

serve but to recall the images of the elegant edifices that once graced the foreground, and of the proud flags that once waved upon the face of that heaving deep. Most truly is it remarked by the historian of Nova Scotia, that the fatality that hangs over places of fallen celebrity, seems to press heavily upon this once valued spot.

In no spot of the British possessions, in the north, did I feel so great an interest as in the ruins of the once powerful fortress of Louisbourg; and I trust my readers will not be uninterested in the brief notices which I have here given of its former grandeur, and present desolation. After leaving this place, I had little opportunity of observing any thing worthy of note. We remained at Cape Breton four days, when we again trimmed our sails for home, and, after encountering and safely weathering the great gale of the seventh of October, during which so many fishermen were wrecked, we made Plymouth light in the evening of the 8th, and on the 9th of October, were safely moored in Plymouth harbor. Those who have been out even "five months" at sea, will well understand the gratification with which we again stepped

upon the loved shores of free and happy New-England.

I have thus, in a brief, and, I am aware, imperfect manner, given a summary of the scenes and scenery that passed under my observation during a five months' absence in Newfoundland and Labrador. My object has been to present such facts concerning those bleak and inhospitable regions, and in relation to the manners, customs, and modes of life of the inhabitants, as will enable the reader to understand their true condition. How far I may have succeeded, is of course left to the candid consideration of the reader ; and if, in addition, I have offered any amusement to those who have devoted a leisure hour to my unpretending narrative, my object will be attained.













